AFTER SADDAM

SAMANTHA POWER, PETER BEINART, THE EDITORS

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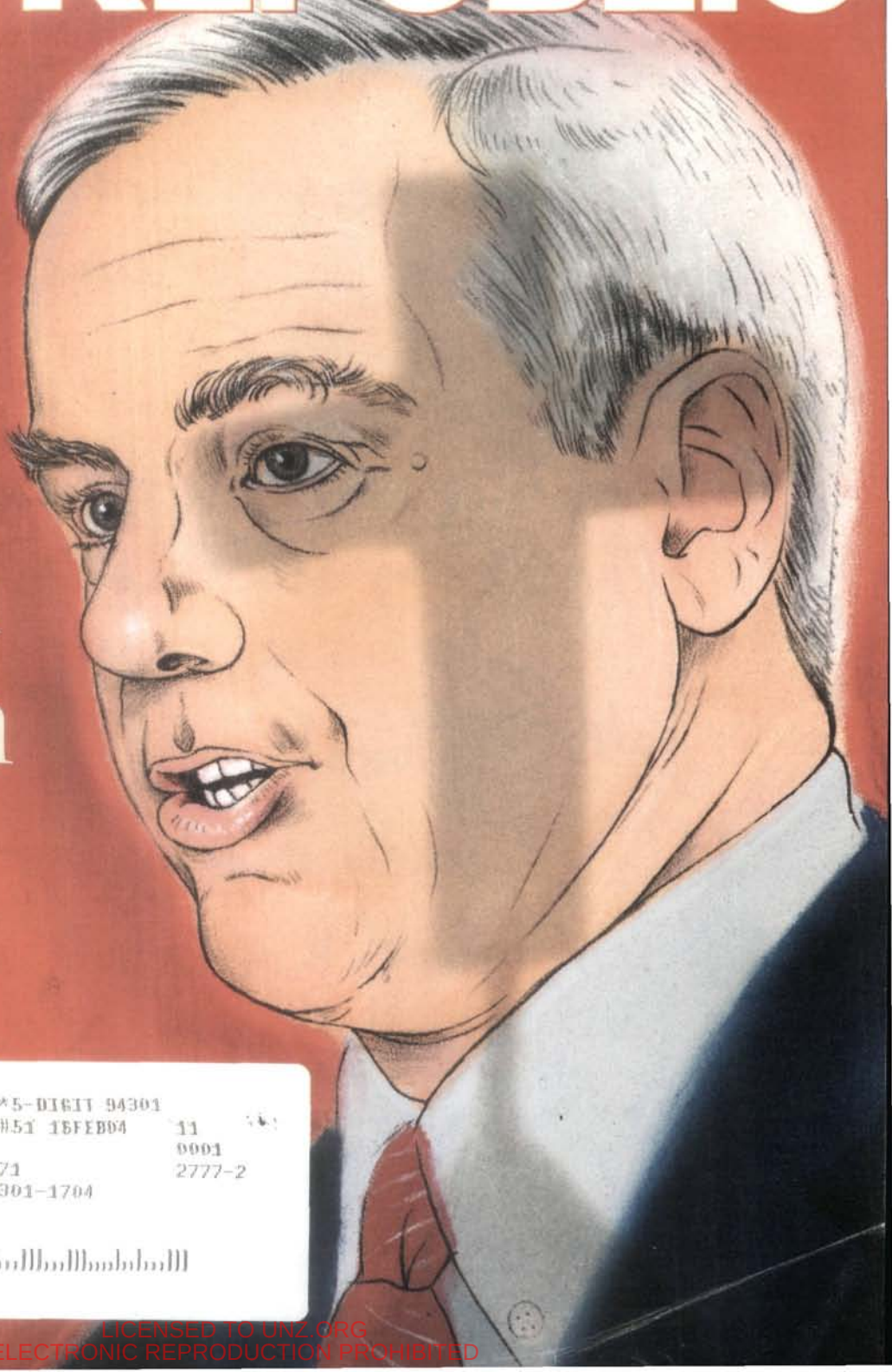
Howard Dean's Religion Problem

Franklin Foer



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CORRESPONDENCE

CAMPAIGN TALE

I NOTICED A COUPLE OF SMALL FACTUAL errors in "Organization Man," Noam Scheiber's otherwise excellent look at the campaigning innovations championed by Joe Trippi, the architect of Howard Dean's grassroots-driven presidential bid (November 17). First, the huge August 24 Sleepless Summer Tour rally in Seattle was not a Meetup; Dean's Meetups, which are indeed numerous and well-attended across Washington state, are held on the first Wednesday of every month. Also, the 15,000-person attendance figure for the Seattle event may be overstated. The Seattle Police Department estimate I heard that night was 8,000, which may well be a little low, but it's unlikely the crowd was much larger than 10,000, given the confines of Westlake Center Park, where the rally was held. And Scheiber's assertion that "it's probably safe to say that none of the other campaigns are even thinking about" Washington state is actually a rather unsafe thing to say. As *The Seattle Times* recently reported, John Kerry's campaign has been devoting considerable resources to Washington state, with seven full-time paid staffers on the ground, and Dennis Kucinich has been visiting frequently and has a Seattle office staffed by committed volunteers.

SANDEEP KAUSHIK
News Writer
The Stranger
Seattle, Washington

JOE TRIPPI SPUN A TALL TALE TO Noam Scheiber. Trippi was not in Iowa in October 1983. He was not the source of the discovery that the Walter Mondale machine was in trouble, nor was he in charge of the Mondale campaign's Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner operation. I was.

Early in the summer of 1983, Alan Cranston's presidential campaign surprised the Mondale campaign and political pundits by winning the Wisconsin state party straw poll. The Mondale campaign vowed not to let it happen again, and the next battle was set for October 1, 1983, at the Maine Democratic Convention. The Mondale campaign sent Trippi to Maine that August to organize delegates and to ensure a Mondale victory in that straw poll. Trippi and a team of talented organizers succeeded at that task.

Meanwhile, back in Iowa, a labor organizer discovered the Cranston campaign had quietly bought the majority of the tickets to the October 8 Iowa Democratic Party's J-J dinner. Cranston was now poised for another straw-poll victory.

Seeing the opportunity to raise more funds for the Iowa Democratic Party, then–party chair Representative David Nagle decided to sell tickets to the balcony of the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, adding hundreds more potential votes to the straw poll. The Mondale campaign, with the support of organized labor, bought up the new tickets.

Eleven days before the J-J dinner, I was hired by the Mondale campaign to manage the operation to find Mondale supporters for these new tickets. Working with the Iowa field staff, I developed a plan to find 2,000 J-J dinner attendees in the remaining ten days. To help execute the plan, the Mondale campaign arranged to have a planeload of Trippi's Maine organizers sent to Iowa the day after the Maine state convention. We succeeded and Mondale won. But what never happened was the story Trippi told Scheiber of a Mondale bus being disguised as a Cranston bus to gain Cranston's tickets.

In mid-December 1983, Trippi became the state director of the Iowa Mondale campaign. At the beginning of January 1984, realizing how bad things were in Iowa, the campaign pulled organizers out of states across the country and sent them to Iowa to work for Trippi. I returned to work as the field

MEXICO IN THE WESTERN MIND
MORE U.S. TROOPS FOR IRAQ
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Joe Trippi and the Dean Internet Revolution
The Man Who Reinvented Campaigning
NOAM SCHEIBER

director, managing a team of over 100 organizers—together we won another victory for Fritz on caucus day.

The Dean operation is impressive. But there have been Organization Men and Women who have built successful field campaigns for Democratic candidates for decades. Time and again, they are not the future celebrity consultants but hardworking, committed organizers who are determined to see their candidate win.

TOM COSGROVE
The Cosgrove Group
Cambridge, Massachusetts

NOAM SCHEIBER REPLIES:
Sandeep Kaushik is right that the August 24 rally in Seattle was not a Meetup. On attendance, most estimates do tend to be in the neighborhood of 10,000, though some were as high as 15,000 (e.g., *National Journal*). As for Howard Dean's rivals, Kerry has in fact

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committed resources to Washington state. (He's the only other major candidate to do so.) But, given the magnitude and intensity of Dean's support there—there are no statewide polls, but *The Seattle Times* reported last month that "Dean has drawn far bigger crowds and raised far more money from Washington than his opponents"—they're unlikely to do him much good.

As Tom Cosgrove points out, Joe Trippi was one of my sources for the J-J dinner story that appears in the piece. But he was hardly the only source. The story (pretty much as I tell it) was first reported in a special "Election Extra" edition of *Newsweek* in November of 1984. I then confirmed it with two other Mondale campaign officials, whom I had good reason to believe knew what had happened. Of course, as is typically the case when you report on an event that took place 20 years earlier, the accounts varied in some of their particulars. That's why I prefaced the entire story with the following disclaimer: "Everyone tells their own version of how Walter Mondale won the straw poll at Iowa's Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in 1983."

After some additional reporting, I think we can say the following: First, Cosgrove was the Mondale aide on the ground in Iowa running the organizing effort in the days leading up to and including the J-J dinner. Trippi, though involved in planning and tactics, was not in Iowa at this point. (Trippi, in his defense, told me he was not in Iowa on the day of the J-J dinner; in the piece, I identify Cosgrove as the one actually on the ground that day.) Second, there appears to have been an effort by Mondale supporters, most of whom had been bused in, to filch tickets from the Cranston tent at the J-J dinner. (One Mondale aide present at the J-J dinner described the scene at the Cranston tent as "planned confusion." "There were definitely some diversionary tactics going there," this aide says.) But no one I spoke with who was on the ground that day recalls Mondale buses being dressed up to look like Cranston buses. In any case, Cosgrove was not involved in this. I apologize for the error.

COST OF LIVING

AS THE FIRST MEMBER OF CONgress to bring American consumers across the Canadian border to purchase their prescription drugs at a fraction of the U.S. cost and as a lead proponent of the legislation now pending in Congress, I have long agreed with the assessment that reimportation itself is not a permanent solution to the astronomical prices Americans are forced to pay for medicine (Josh Benson, "Drugged," November 17). But it most certainly will work to bring down prices in the United States in the long run. If Congress passes strong reimportation legislation—which, by definition, must include a strong prohibition of the anti-competitive behavior by manufacturers that Benson highlights—American prescription-drug wholesalers, pharmacists, and consumers would be able to buy prescription drugs at a fraction of the price they are paying now. Once this alternative source of medicine is available at U.S. drugstores, manufacturers will be forced to offer competitive and fair prices directly to their buyers in the United States.

BERNIE SANDERS
U.S. Representative
Washington, D.C.

edm THE EMERGING DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY
THE ELECTRONIC STRATEGY CENTER FOR BUILDING THE NEW MAJORITY

By the end of this decade, demographic groups that generally support Democrats will provide the basis for a broad electoral majority. But the Democrats cannot convert this growing electoral base into an election-winning coalition until they overcome the deep split within the party.

Ruy Teixeira

Among rank and file Democrats, the real division is not the ideological split between centrists and populist-progressives but the practical differences between issue-oriented activists and professional political campaign workers. They have different goals, but when these two groups meet in a political campaign they find their needs and objectives overlap. **On basic Democratic principles and values, far more unites them than divides them.**

Today Democrats have a profound moral and social obligation to seek unity. Democratic divisions have allowed Republicans to embrace an ideological extremism and "win at any cost" mentality that threatens not only the Democrats as a political party but many basic American values and institutions.

What is urgently needed is a dialogue among Democrats to establish minimum standards of mutual respect and cooperation between the various sectors of the party. Beyond this Democrats need a new approach to political strategy, one based on the hard facts about public opinion and the belief that centrist strategies for winning majorities can be combined with progressive goals and ideals.

The Emerging Democratic Majority website and e-newsletter has been created as a meeting ground where rank and file Democrats who share this perspective can find resources and strategic analysis for building a new Democratic majority. I invite you to visit the site and subscribe to the EDM newsletter today.

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Thinking Big

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

INTELLECTUALLY, SADDAM HUSSEIN'S capture tells us nothing about whether the Iraq war was a good idea. Find Saddam's nuclear weapons program, and you validate President Bush's claim that Iraq was a threat. Find evidence of Saddam's ties to Al Qaeda, and you validate the president's claim that Iraq was the logical next step in the war on terrorism. But find Saddam himself, cowering in a hole, and all you learn is another lesson about the resourcefulness of the U.S. military and the loathsome character of the man it hunted. The policy arguments for and against the war don't change one bit.

But, emotionally, Saddam's capture makes it much harder to oppose the war—at least for the moment. When Howard Dean went before the cameras to address the Saddam news on Sunday, he wisely avoided reiterating his antiwar stance. By contrast, Joe Lieberman and Richard Gephardt—who have paid dearly for hawkishness—suddenly flaunted their support for the war. A writer for *National Review Online* noted that, in the hours after word of Saddam's capture broke, liberal websites were largely silent.

They were stunned into silence by the force of two images. The first was the sight of Iraqis dancing in the streets. Intellectually, most liberals, like most conservatives, believe the Iraq war should be judged by its effect on U.S. security. But, emotionally, liberals are uncomfortable with the cold language of national interest. Post-Clinton liberals, like W.-era conservatives, consider themselves custodians of the revolutionary democratic spirit of 1989. For a moment in April, when it looked like the United States had brought Prague Spring to Baghdad, antiwar liberals were speechless. They couldn't bring themselves to counter Iraqi euphoria with realpolitik arguments about the misallocation of U.S. resources.

They regained their voice over the summer, when news footage of angry protests and daily attacks conveyed the message that many Iraqis didn't consider us liberators after all. The suggestion that the occupation might not be good for Iraq gave Democrats the moral cover to argue that it wasn't good for the United States. But Iraqi ecstasy at Saddam's capture has quieted the former argument, at least for a while. And, in its absence, few Democrats have the heart to make the latter.

The second image that stunned antiwar liberals into silence was that of Saddam himself, looking like a beaten man. All along, the Bush administration has understood that, while making an empirical connection between Saddam and the September 11 attacks is hard, making an emotional connection is easy. Ever since the World Trade Center fell, Americans have yearned to teach our enemies a lesson, a yearning not nearly sated by the overthrow of the hapless Taliban. Saddam has been public enemy number one since 1990, a decade before most Americans knew who Osama bin Laden was. And, by placing him at the center of its war on terrorism, the Bush administration made him bin Laden's thematic twin, their ideological differences notwithstanding. So, emotionally at least, when American troops dragged a humiliated Saddam from his lair, they were avenging America's humiliation on September 11. While antiwar liberals might see Saddam's capture as a distraction from the hunt for bin Laden, it felt to most Americans like a precursor, a sign that the correct order of things—disrupted on 9/11—was being restored. The patriotic surge that gripped the country after September 11, and after the fall of Baghdad, swelled once again. To cavil at America's triumph seemed almost unpatriotic, a Grinch-like effort to deny Americans the success they needed and deserved.

There may be a lesson in all this for the Democrats in 2004. Most of the Democratic presidential candidates have been arguing that the United States should do less in Iraq—spend less money, withdraw some troops, relinquish political control to the United Nations. But, while Americans may not like spending money on Iraq, and they certainly don't like seeing American soldiers die, they still hunger for a U.S. victory commensurate with the loss that occurred on September 11, 2001. Post–9/11, the public is far more receptive than it was in the '90s to grand efforts couched in patriotic terms. Bush won the homeland security debate in 2002 by co-opting a big idea—a new Cabinet department—and leaving Democrats to niggle around the edges. He won the Iraq debate—and is still winning it, although his primary justification for the war looks more and more dubious—because he had a big idea about what to do after Afghanistan, and the Democrats had no big alternative. No wonder he's now talking about a mission to the moon.

Democrats have to change this dynamic. It's not enough, as Dean did in his foreign policy speech this week, to offer worthy, small-bore proposals like spending more to secure nuclear and other hazardous materials around the globe. The Democrats need a large cause of their own. And there's only one that's emotionally relevant: capturing bin Laden and decapitating Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda may be a complex organization with affiliates around the world. But, by most accounts, its leadership remains where it was two years ago when the Bush administration botched Operation Anaconda: in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Despite its legendary aggressiveness, the Bush administration has been remarkably timid in its efforts to do something about that. It has sent relatively few troops to southeastern Afghanistan. (Indeed, one of the reasons for the awful bombing accidents of recent weeks may be that the United States was forced to go after Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters from the air because we lack the troops to go after them on the ground.) And it has sent no troops at all—at least publicly—into Pakistan, leaving bin Laden–hunting to the deeply compromised Pakistani military.

Why don't the Democrats propose deploying a big chunk of the U.S. military—including substantial ground troops—to both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border? It would cost money, and lives, and cause a huge outcry in Islamabad and elsewhere. And there would be no guarantee of success. But it would give Democrats a big answer to the primal question that still dominates our politics: How will you avenge September 11? The Bush administration gave its answer last week, and it left its critics mute. If the Democrats are ever to truly regain their voice, they need one of their own.

PETER BEINART

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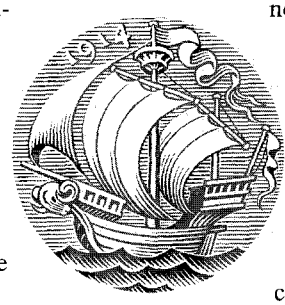
Caught

"'Now, what do they find so hideous in my action?' he kept saying to himself. 'That it was an evildoing? What does the word 'evildoing' mean? My conscience is clear. Of course, a criminal act was committed; of course, the letter of the law was broken and blood was shed; well, then, have my head for the letter of the law . . . and enough! Of course, in that case even many benefactors of mankind, who did not inherit power but seized it for themselves, ought to have been executed at their very first steps. But those men endured their steps, and therefore they were right.'"

Is this what Saddam Hussein was reading in his hole in the ground in the company of rats? It is tempting to imagine it: Those are Raskolnikov's words, and a copy of *Crime and Punishment* was found among the tyrant's fugitive possessions. But the temptation must be resisted, because the romanticization of such a man, the promotion of him into myth, represents a terrible misunderstanding of the nature of the villainy that he personified. There was never anything large about Saddam, except his power and his wanton employment of it. His tyranny was singularly lacking in grandeur. It stood for nothing except itself. He was a hick who made it to history's stage; in all his wars and his crimes, with all his oil and all his cash, always and only a Tikriti. He tortured as coarsely as he built. He was, in fact, a fool—his aggression against Iran, his invasion of Kuwait, and his defiance of the U.N. Security Council's resolutions about his lethal arsenal are surely some of the most spectacular blunders in history. But his folly made him more of a menace, not less of one: A million soldiers senselessly killed are still a million soldiers killed, a village senselessly murdered by chemicals is still a village murdered by chemicals. His crudity was the twin of his cruelty. So the shabbiness of his ending was exhilaratingly apposite. The collapse of his dictatorship was established not by a search for weapons of mass destruction, but by a search for lice. In his hole, Saddam appeared as he really was: a barbarian, a foul and unfascinating provincial killer with whom civilization finally caught up.

The capture of Saddam Hussein has already proved analytically useful. For the reaction to this event is a fine measure of the intactness of one's moral sense. It is discouraging to read about the demonstrations on Saddam's behalf in Iraq, not only in Tikrit but also in Falluja, where people shouted that "we defend Saddam with our souls," but it is outrageous to learn of support for him in other Arab capitals. The editor of a newspaper in Saudi Arabia expressed his ambivalence to *The New York Times*. "On the one hand, we are very happy. . . . On the other hand, to see him so humiliated—he is an Arab president after all. . . . Whether you love him or hate him, he is still a member of the family." This is not solidarity; this is the corruption of solidarity. As for Palestine: There is no clearer measure of the extent to which large segments of the Palestinian community are not prepared for peace and modernity than the images of the wrathful demonstrations in Gaza's streets.



And then there was the lukewarmness of the Democratic front-runner. About the capture of Saddam Hussein, Howard Dean was churlish and puny. He did not include a joyful adjective or an excited adverb in his response to the event. "The capture of Saddam is a good thing, which I hope very much will keep our soldiers . . . safer," he told the Pacific Council in Los Angeles. "But the capture of Saddam has not made America safer." A good thing? TiVo is a good thing. The incarceration of Saddam Hussein is a great thing. If Dean does not believe that America is safer if Saddam is no longer at large, then he has a highly unimaginative notion of American safety. His concern for the security of American soldiers is very affecting, but it is not a national security policy. Dean insisted that Saddam's capture will not "move us toward defeating enemies who pose an even greater danger: Al Qaeda and its terrorist allies." Well, maybe it won't. But neither will it move us toward campaign finance reform. Dean's remarks reflect not only his historical incompetence, but also his resentment that the president caught a lucky break. If George W. Bush were to discover a cure for cancer, Howard Dean would demand to know what he is doing about AIDS.

The capture of Saddam does not make the war right, just as the failure to capture Saddam did not make the war wrong. The arguments will rightly and ferociously continue. But shame on all who do not see that justice, which is rare in this world, has this week been done. ■

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NOTEBOOK

Arnold Schwarzenegger's Broken Promise . . . Jesse Jackson's Bad Analogy

YOU GET WHAT YOU VOTE FOR

Twenty-two days. That's how long it took Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to go from being sworn in to publicly thumbing his nose at two major campaign promises: (1) that cities and counties had his personal "guarantee" they would be compensated for the loss of revenue from California's car tax, the rollback of which was a top Schwarzenegger priority; and (2) that education funding would be cut "over my dead body."

Somebody better start checking for a pulse. In a December 9 interview on CNN's "Inside Politics," Schwarzenegger suggested that, in light of the state's dire financial situation, California's constitutionally mandated spending formula on education, outlined in Proposition 98, might bear revisiting: "Maybe have a suspension; some relief there so you can pull out of this next two years and then pay it back, maybe," the *Pumping Iron* star proposed with his usual eloquence. And, oh yes, any locality worried about the $4 billion in lost car-tax revenue shouldn't look to the governor for relief. Rather, "[local officials] should put pressure on their state legislators, because they've spent their money," Schwarzenegger told CNN. "It's not me taking anything away from them; it's they've spent their money."

One might be tempted to feel sorry for the Golden State. Being at the mercy of a Terminator with no experience in human governance is truly a frightening prospect. Then again, you get what you vote for—and a whopping 49 percent of Californians who voted for a replacement for Gray Davis cast their lot with Schwarzenegger. This, despite the fact that he offered few specifics about how he'd run the state. Of course, it's now evident that even those details Schwarzenegger did provide were nonsense. But what'd you expect from the actor who starred in *True Lies*?

Arnold Schwarzenegger

JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY

The reactions to the recent revelation by 78-year-old Essie Mae Washington-Williams that she is, in fact, the late Strom Thurmond's mixed-race daughter were relatively predictable. A lawyer for the Thurmond family issued a terse acknowledgement of Washington-Williams's "heritage" and a "hope this acknowledgement will bring closure for Mrs. Williams." Thurmond's 31-year-old son, J. Strom Thurmond Jr.—who is currently the U.S. attorney for South Carolina and is reported to have political ambitions—said simply, "We have no reason to believe Ms. Williams was not telling the truth." And scores of commentators rushed to rightly condemn the late senator, both for his dishonesty (over the course of his career, Thurmond repeatedly dismissed questions about whether he was Washington-Williams's father as too undignified to warrant comment) and for his hypocrisy (as the Dixiecrat candidate for president in 1948, Thurmond once declared, "On the question of social intermingling of the races, our people draw the line").

But then Jesse Jackson came along and absurdly compared Thurmond to Thomas Jefferson, arguing that both men reflected "a deep and ugly Southern tradition" of white men exploiting black female employees. (Washington-Williams was born in 1925 to the 22-year-old Thurmond and his parents' 16-year-old black maid; Jefferson, many historians believe, fathered at least one child with his slave Sally Hemmings.) "The point that strikes me the most is that [Thurmond] lived one hundred years and never acknowledged his daughter," Jackson said. "He never let her eat at his table. He fought for laws that kept his daughter segregated and in an inferior position. He never fought to give her first-class status. Thomas Jefferson did pretty much the same."

Jackson obviously meant the comparison to be derogatory. But uttering Jefferson's name in the same breath as Thurmond's only provides the senator with a wholly undeserved encomium. Thurmond, after all, was a political hack: In his 48-year Senate career, he managed to produce not one piece of substantial legislation; his only moment of real distinction was his shameful 24-hour-long speech filibustering the 1957 Civil Rights Act. Jefferson, by contrast, penned the words that ultimately spelled the end for slavery and segregation. The personal may well be political, but that doesn't make Strom Thurmond Thomas Jefferson.

MERCURIAL POLICY

This week the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it would reclassify mercury from a "hazardous pollutant" to merely a "pollutant," effectively arguing that a metal that causes hundreds of thousands of birth defects per year is not

David Cowles

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much more harmful than carbon dioxide. The reason for the reclassification, however, wasn't any new toxicological insight—it was a desire to make mercury-emitters eligible for trade-pollution credits, a key item on the energy industry's wish list. Unfortunately, enacting this market-based "solution" to pollution will dramatically increase the amount of mercury in the environment. Previous EPA regulations had called for a 90 percent reduction in mercury emissions within three years; now, plants will only have to effect a 30 percent reduction spread out over 15 years.

The funny thing is that just last week the EPA, in tandem with the Food and Drug Administration, warned pregnant women and small children that, because of the concentrated levels of mercury often found in large ocean-dwelling fish, they should limit their consumption of tuna. The warning was vague, but it clearly contradicts this week's rules change. Because mercury settles in rivers, lakes, and oceans and tends to bio-accumulate in predatory fish, the relaxed rules may very well mean more mercury in the nation's tuna supply. A spokesperson for the National Resources Defense Council notes there is a "perverse clash" in the administration's logic. Or just a complete absence thereof.

WAR BY COMMITTEE

"SOME OBSERVERS HAVE EXAGGERATED both the scope of preemption in foreign policy and the centrality of preemption in U.S. strategy as a whole. . . . This distortion does a disservice to honest observers trying to understand U.S. policy, and it contributes to irrational partisanship."
—Colin Powell in the January/February 2004 issue of *Foreign Affairs*

"CALL CONGRESS NOW. Tell them to support the President's policy of preemptive self-defense."
—On-screen text from a TV ad by the Republican National Committee.

TNR PRIMARY

CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

Candidate: Howard Dean
Category: Intellectual Honesty
Grade: F

Deanophiles love to spin their candidate's weaknesses into strengths, but outright hypocrisy may be a tough sell. Turns out that, although old Howard has been bashing the Bush administration's coziness with corporate America, under his direction Vermont quietly became the leading state for a dubious tax-break scheme known as "captive insurance."

As reported in *The Boston Globe*, captive insurance is essentially a way to shield corporate profits from state taxes. It starts when a parent company buys insurance from one of its subsidiaries. The parent company makes premium payments to the subsidiary for the insurance policy, and Vermont takes a piece of those premiums in taxes. So far, so good. But, under the Vermont law that Dean pushed, the subsidiary can then reinvest those premiums and keep the resulting profits tax-free. The captive-insurance operation may even allow non-Vermont companies to dodge their home states' tax bills.

As a University of Connecticut law school professor told the *Globe*, "Dean apparently has no problems with tax havens as long as they are in the state of Vermont." Indeed, Vermont is home to more captive insurers than the 49 other states combined. And, in 2001, Dean boasted that he wanted Vermont to "overtake Bermuda" as the number-one destination for such operations.

Asked about captive insurers, a Dean spokesman said, "This is a legitimate industry, perfectly legal." Depending, I suppose, on what the meaning of "is" is.

—Josh Benson

WORD PLAY

Candidate: John Kerry
Category: General Likeability
Grade: D

I knew it couldn't last. Say something nice about JFK's humanity and almost immediately he does something to make you sorry. Specifically, late last week, in defending his use of the word "fuck" in the recent *Rolling Stone* interview, John Kerry managed this fumbling, pathetic defense: "I might have used the word 'bungled.' I might have used the word 'lied.' I might have used the word 'misled.' I might have used the word 'screwed up' or any number of things. . . . But then I went to the thesaurus and looked it up. And I think I pretty well described what they did in Iraq, frankly."

Egads, man! Have you gone completely mental? It's one thing to have Americans think you publicly uttered an A-list vulgarity out of passion or frustration or even calculated earnestness. It's quite another to plant the image in their heads of you sitting around thumbing through a frigging *thesaurus*. How anal can you get? Even if you do that sort of thing on a regular basis, for God's sake, don't admit it! You're hoping to go head-to-head with a "regular-guy" president whose favorite reading material is *Bassmaster*. Being seen as an uptight, pointy-headed thesaurus-thumber will not help you win the hearts and minds of the voting public. Get a grip, senator. Learn to keep your filthy reading habits to yourself.

—Michelle Cottle

GENERAL GRANT

Candidate: Wesley Clark
Category: Domestic Policy
Grade: B

For a variety of reasons, the Democratic candidates have decided that the problem of college-tuition hikes, and the resulting exclusion of millions from higher education, should be a key plank in their domestic policy platforms. Unfortunately, most take a feed-the-fire approach, pumping more money into the system through financial aid without addressing the causes behind the cost increases.

Wesley Clark's "Universal College Grant Plan," a part of his new push to beef up his policy credentials, isn't perfect, but it stands apart from many of the other candidates' by recognizing that, at least at public colleges, the recent skyrocketing in tuition costs (50 percent over the last decade) is due in no small part to the drop in state higher-education budgets. So, in addition to a proposed $12,000 grant to students for the first two years of college, the plan would put $10 billion per year toward helping relieve pressure on states; it would also create a commission to "to study the causes of tuition increases and suggest solutions."

True, "creating a commission" is a bureaucratic poison pill for real reform. And Clark's plan fails to address the fact that colleges—public and private alike—spend far too much of their budget on sports teams and non-curricular amenities, but Clark's plan is a good start, not least because it starts where the others end.

—Clay Risen

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CARICATURES BY ZACH TRENHOLM

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Campaign Journal

Fourth Way

BY RYAN LIZZA

When Howard Dean delivered his big foreign policy address in Los Angeles last Monday, coverage of a speech meant to plant him firmly in the Democratic mainstream was dominated by a single, easy-to-caricature line: "The capture of Saddam Hussein has not made America safer." Dean added the line to the speech at the last minute. "The governor penciled that line in himself," says a senior aide. "Technically, he's right, but you just might not want to say it that way." Indeed, the next day, the press, almost every other Democratic candidate, and much of the conservative echo chamber trashed Dean for the supposed gaffe. But, rather than retract the line, Dean actually made it a part of his stump speech, stubbornly arguing in Arizona the following day, "I hope very much this [Saddam's capture] will begin to diminish attacks on our troops, but I do not think it will make America's homeland safer."

For good or ill, Dean does not back down, even—especially—when everyone else thinks he's on the losing side of an argument. Next up: the future of the Democratic Party. This week, in a speech scheduled for the day after The New Republic goes to press, Dean will also lay out his vision on domestic policy, and what he has to say will surprise many. For the first time in this campaign, Dean will attempt to wrap his major policies into a larger governing philosophy, something he now calls "a New Social Contract with Working Families." Says an aide, "It's an attempt to give all of his proposals a packaging and a vision." Conventional wisdom argues that what Dean needs to do in this big speech is tack to the center, claim the mantle of Clintonian centrism, and begin pivoting toward the general election. Naturally, he intends to do the opposite.

Well, sort of. Instead of slavishly paying tribute to the politics of mid-'90s Clintonism, as every other major candidate is doing, Dean is going to point out how the Third Way lost its way. "He's laying out a new social contract that he would like to create between families, corporations, and government," a senior adviser explains. "The vision of it is that a social contract was first built by Franklin D. Roosevelt. With Social Security and other programs, the government stepped in to make sure people have certain freedoms. [That social contract] was built on by Kennedy and Johnson—the goal of eradicating poverty, for example." Since Lyndon Johnson, Dean believes, Democrats have failed to build on and defend this legacy. "The Democratic Party under Clinton declared, 'The era of big government is over,'" the aide continues. "The idea was to minimize the damage done by Republicans as they rolled back the New Deal. But, in trying to say that the era of big government is over, essentially the Democratic Party has shifted to a defensive posture." Dean wants to go on offense. The text of Dean's speech declares, "I reject the notion that damage control must be our credo."

For Democrats who think the Dean campaign is setting the party back 20 years, his new speech will only confirm their belief that his candidacy is an explicit rejection of Clintonism. "From the beginning, [Dean] has tried to tap the same vein [Bill] Bradley did [in 2000]: liberals who thought Clintonism was fundamentally unprincipled," says a senior Clinton adviser. "The reason you don't find many Clintonites in the Dean campaign is that the Dean approach rejects so much of the Clinton approach. The most prominent Clintonite on Dean's team, Chris Edley, was one of the most prominent dissidents who disagreed with Clinton's way of doing things." In this view, the Dean campaign is driven by liberals who feel guilty about Clinton's tacks to the center.

Dean's aides argue that he is not rejecting Clintonism but building upon it. Reforming welfare and balancing the budget, they say, were measures intended to restore the public's faith in government so that it would once again be respected as a tool for social progress—not as first steps toward dismantling government even further. If Clintonism simply means planting the ideological flag in the center, they add, then that center will just keep drifting right as Democrats repeatedly accommodate themselves to the Republican tug. Dean is merely positioning himself as the Democrat who is willing to tug back.

It's true that, as governor of Vermont, Dean was a proud New Democrat, championing welfare reform and balancing budgets. During the Clinton years, Dean was condemned by liberals, such as Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, for his rabid defense of welfare reform. Similarly, Jeremy Ben-Ami, a veteran of Clinton's domestic policy council and now the Dean campaign's policy director, was an advocate of welfare reform inside the White House. (One of the few times Ben-Ami's name appeared in print during the Clinton years was when anti-poverty activists met with him to discuss welfare in 1997 and complained to the press that he was too obsessed with cost.) "Welfare was just out of step with the core values of the country, and I firmly believe in welfare reform," says Ben-Ami. "It was right on policy grounds and extremely important to the Democratic Party." Dean's New Social Contract, he says, "is the logical next step for the New Democrats. ... I feel strongly that Clinton's agenda was one hundred percent right. The Democratic Party needed to do it. But it's a new world. We need a new set of ideas and responses and a new vision. And the Republican Party is different, too. It's more heinous."

So what are these new ideas and responses? Dean's speech reiterates his support for a plan to move the country

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toward universal health care—but incrementally, by expanding existing programs. It includes his plan to increase funding to help working parents pay for child care and higher education. He's going to start talking about tax reform, not just the repeal of the Bush tax cuts (a proposal for a middle-class tax cut is in the works, according to an aide). A plan to create some kind of retirement security account is also being written, but the details are a work in progress. Dean will also lay out some modest new proposals to deal with the excesses of corporate America. "He'll attempt to hit the reregulation theme without using that word," says an aide.

All in all, it's a fairly moderate set of policy proposals. Indeed, if one were to put them in an existing category of political thought, that category would probably be Clintonism. As has been the case throughout his campaign, Dean has reversed the usual political calculus, offering relatively moderate proposals while positioning himself as outside the mainstream Democratic establishment. (Compare him, for example, with Richard Gephardt, who takes every rhetorical opportunity to attach himself to Clinton, even as he campaigns on trade restrictions and a $230 billion-per-year health care plan.) The other candidate whose message Dean's most closely resembles now is probably John Edwards, who talks regularly about middle-class financial insecurity. A Dean aide agrees but says their pitch to working families is a "more ambitious" version of the Edwards plan, which they see as rooted in Clinton-era timidity. "The line Clinton always used was, 'If you work hard and play by the rules, you shouldn't have to raise your kids in poverty,'" says a senior Dean adviser. "But is that good enough? What Dean is laying out is a little more ambitious than that. A family that works hard and plays by the rules should be able to make ends meet."

Which brings us to what may be the primary reason for Dean's latest rhetorical tack. The media may tag his New Social Contract as a move to the left at a time when conventional wisdom says he should be moderating his image. But, right now, the political imperative for Dean is not necessarily to move to the middle. It's still only December, after all. And, while his views on the war have given him a virtual lock on the upscale social liberals who will likely propel him to victory in Iowa and (especially) New Hampshire, he still needs to reach out to downscale Democrats who disproportionately rely on government help. These are the voters who will decide his fate in South Carolina, Oklahoma, Arizona, and the other Southern and Western states that start voting on February 3. In the past, Democratic candidates with a profile similar to Dean's—Gary Hart in 1984, Paul Tsongas in 1992, and Bill Bradley in 2000—found the post–New Hampshire contests to be a graveyard because they were never able to break out of what Ron Brownstein has nicely termed the "Starbucks ghetto." By contrast, it was by championing traditional Democratic spending programs like Social Security and Medicare with a populist, outsider message that Clinton clinched the 1992 nomination. And that may be the most fundamental way in which Dean's new political posture is a reflection, rather than a rejection, of Clinton. ■

Buenos Aires Dispatch

Southern Justice

BY DAVID SAX

When Argentina's politicians see thousands rallying outside the Congress building, it is usually an ominous sign. More than a few governments have been brought down by such demonstrations in Buenos Aires in recent years, and, at a glance, the scene at one August gathering was no different. A collection of trade unionists, human rights groups, students, unemployed, and *piqueteros* (the subsidized activists at the front line of many marches) were beating their drums, singing their songs, and uncorking champagne.

Champagne? On second look, this was more of a celebration than a protest. Inside, Congress, prompted by new President Nestor Kirchner, had agreed to nullify amnesty laws that shielded former military figures from prosecution for abuses committed during Argentina's "dirty war" of the 1970s. Outside, amid the laughter and tears of families of people who disappeared during the dirty war and the deafening booms of firecrackers, cries of "Viva Kirchner" and "Viva el Presidente" wafted through the crowd.

For Kirchner, the repeal of the amnesty laws garnered not only local but also international praise. Politicians and editorialists around the world applauded Kirchner's vow to end "Argentina's culture of impunity." As *The New York Times* wrote, "It is surprising, and welcome, to see its new president, Nestor Kirchner, take on a sensitive issue from the more distant past." As further evidence of this commitment, foreign leaders cited Kirchner's reversal of a ban on extraditing military officers, which led to the arrest—upon the request of a Spanish judge—of 40 alleged Argentine human rights violators. Others pointed out Kirchner's desire to reform the Supreme Court and other corrupt institutions. For the first time since the end of military rule in 1983, Argentina appeared to be moving toward a reckoning with its dark past.

Four months later, that praise for Kirchner looks premature. Spain never formally requested the extraditions, the 40

David Sax covers Argentina for several publications and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

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prisoners were freed after only six weeks in custody, and the repeal of the amnesty laws has only led to wrangling within the judicial system. In fact, much of Kirchner's supposed fight against the past is merely window dressing designed to shore up political support. Worse, many Argentines now believe Kirchner has played fast and loose with the law. In fact, the "culture of impunity" he vowed to eradicate has been replaced by a sloppy and legally dubious attempt to cement a shaky political mandate.

KIRCHNER BECAME PRESIDENT in May, after his nearest rival, former President Carlos Menem, bowed out of a second-round runoff. That left Kirchner the victor though he had won only 22 percent of the popular vote in the first round. As a result, he had to quickly cement his popularity with the Argentine public. "He needed to develop a reputation," says Sergio Berensztein, professor of political science at the University of Torcuato Di Tella. He had "to take advantage of any opportunity to show strength."

And Kirchner did just that. He brought the ax out early and started swinging, firing officials from the most unpopular, retrograde institutions in Argentinean politics: the military, intelligence services, banks, and the Supreme Court. Conveniently for Kirchner, many of these leaders were also powerful allies of former President Menem—so removing them helped Kirchner politically as well. "Kirchner so far has this strategy of only picking issues which would allow him to enlarge his support base," says Berensztein.

Kirchner's campaign against the legacy of Argentina's most recent dictatorship, from 1976 to 1983, has been the most globally visible example of this strategy of confronting the past. And the effect on his image is evident. The president's popularity rose sharply in late July, when the possible extraditions led to the rounding up of the 40 former officers. But the campaign has never really threatened the country's worst institutions. Within the military, Kirchner has targeted only a few elderly and symbolic figures, even though the number of living human rights violators could be as high as 2,000 officers. Hugo Alconada, a journalist with the newspaper *La Nacion*, says the president's efforts won't go beyond a handful of individuals. "[Kirchner is] not going to take measures that are going to hit the real power in the military forces in the country. The twenty-six-year-old lieutenants who pulled the triggers two decades ago are now colonels and generals in the army. Do you imagine any Argentine judge taking current colonels or generals to trial? He's going after the [best] known and powerless symbols of the dictatorship. Not [those] who control the tanks."

Worse, Kirchner's methods are undermining the transparency and fairness of the legal system. His willingness to speedily purge the Supreme Court of "corrupt" judges is actually a purge of justices that were close to Menem. Two have already resigned rather than face impeachment from a Congress prodded by Kirchner. In fact, many legal experts feel Kirchner is putting enormous pressure on Congress to quickly remove these judges.

His overturning of the amnesty law could be worse. Congress and President Raul Alfonsin drafted amnesty laws in the late '80s to prevent a military uprising in the face of ongoing prosecutions. Essentially restricting potential trials to the highest-ranking officers, the legislation capped the judicial process against the military and the guerrilla groups that opposed them. The move was necessary for a smooth transition to democracy, and it was achieved through democratic and legal means.

Yet bringing anyone to trial will likely require a radical reinterpretation of the amnesty law by the Supreme Court or a questionable regard for the constitution. Those military figures who were tried, convicted, and then pardoned cannot be tried again for the same crimes—even though the amnesty law has now been repealed—because Argentina prohibits double-jeopardy trials. And, according to the constitution, people can only be prosecuted for crimes committed after an amnesty is lifted, possibly prohibiting the courts from taking on war criminals. The only option is for the Supreme Court to rule the original laws unconstitutional and then uphold that ruling through years of appeals and arguments. Most legal experts feel this is a serious stretch, and the chance of anyone seeing a prison term at home or abroad is remote if not nonexistent.

That legal reinterpretation could have far-reaching implications for the entire judicial system, impacting areas from criminal trials to financial dealings and undermining the independence of the judiciary and the constitution. What lawyers fear most is that Kirchner is recklessly changing the law to suit his political needs. "It [was] a very politically profitable decision," says Martin Böhmer, dean of law at the University of Palermo, who feels Kirchner is focused on achieving the desired end regardless of the means. "It's not simply a matter of saying, 'I don't like these laws; let's change them.' You have to pay some respect to the process." But Kirchner has a history of pressuring the judiciary to suit his needs, having stacked the courts and public attorneys offices with allies during his rule as governor of Santa Cruz Province throughout the 1990s.

ALL THIS HAS placed Argentinean democracy in a catch-22. If those responsible for the 30,000 dead and countless tortured during the dirty war go unpunished, the nation looks incapable of dealing justly with its past. But Kirchner's approach has ensured that pursuing justice to the end will only be possible by subverting and manipulating the laws of the country. Either way, democracy loses and the rule of law is weakened.

For Kirchner, the sacrifice has so far been worth it. His approval ratings are high, his control over Congress has been solidified, and he is the darling of foreign governments and the international press. By going after the remnants of Argentina's right-wing dictatorship, he is free to criticize the United States at the United Nations and maintain a close relationship with Fidel Castro—his actions

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shielded by a reputation as Latin America's champion of human rights.

But time is not on his side. Going after symbols of the dictatorship has been relatively easy. Digging Argentina out of its current hole is a monumental challenge. Nearly half the population lives in poverty, crime is growing, and institutions are in need of major reform that cannot be achieved by simply dispatching scapegoats. International creditors are pounding on the doors, and tough words will not cut it with the International Monetary Fund. One day soon, protesters may put down their champagne bottles and pick up signs calling for another Argentine president's head. ■

Jerusalem Dispatch

Unsettled

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

NO ONE EMBODIES the desperate twists of Israeli politics better than Yuval Steinitz. In 1983, the then–philosophy student and left-wing activist was wounded when a right-winger threw a grenade at the Peace Now demonstrators he was marching with; Steinitz still has shrapnel in his thigh from the attack. Barely a decade later, Steinitz, by that point a best-selling philosopher, stunned the left by concluding that the Oslo process was a fraud. He joined the Likud, and, today, as chairman of the Knesset's prestigious Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, is one of the party's leading hawks, advocating dismantling the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and exiling Yasir Arafat.

Last week, Steinitz took another ideological turn. Speaking on Israeli radio, he urged the government to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza, which would mean uprooting most of the settlements in the strip and allowing an independent Palestine to emerge there. Then, if the Palestinians demonstrated goodwill over the next few years, the process would be extended to the West Bank. "The right is correct about the security dangers facing Israel, but the left is correct about the demographic threat," he says. "Separating first in Gaza is less dangerous than in the West Bank, which has the longest border with Israel and would be much harder to control."

The significance of Steinitz's plan isn't in the details but in the willingness of even hard-liners to consider what was, until a few weeks ago, an unthinkable option within the Likud and the military. After Ehud Barak's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, which many here believe led Arafat to begin his terror war four months later, the Israeli mainstream came to see unilateral withdrawal as synonymous with appeasement. Army Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon argued that unilateral withdrawal from the territories played right into the Palestinians' strategy: to win concessions through terrorism rather than negotiations. He insisted that even withdrawal from Netzarim, an isolated and repeatedly attacked settlement of 60 families in Gaza that most of the public wants to abandon, would encourage the terrorist appetite and convince Palestinian leaders that the "Hezbollah option" was working after all.

NOW, HOWEVER, Ariel Sharon has declared that, if the road map fails, he too would consider unilateral withdrawal—hinting that he might abandon all the Gaza settlements, as well as isolated settlements in the West Bank, and create a new border that would absorb at least part of the territories into Israel. Pressure is building from Sharon's indispensable coalition partner, the center-left Shinui Party, to withdraw from Netzarim immediately. Meanwhile, Ehud Olmert, Sharon's hawkish deputy, has advocated unilateral withdrawal from most of the territories—a position Sharon has rebuked in only the mildest terms. Another hard-line Likud leader, Education Minister Limor Livnat, declared she'd support unilateral withdrawal if Israel then annexed remaining settlement blocs. Even Israel's generals have begun speaking of the benefits of "redeployment." For the first time, there's a realization that settlements are going to be uprooted, with or without negotiations. And, while Sharon may be using the threat of a unilaterally imposed border to force Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei to crack down on terrorism and begin negotiating an interim Palestinian state, the idea of circumventing the diplomatic process altogether has won broad support: According to one poll, 55 percent of the Israeli public backs Olmert's plan, including 48 percent of Likud voters and even 28 percent of settlers.

What has suddenly made unilateral withdrawal popular on the right isn't a new realization of the demographic threat posed by absorbing all the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza into the Jewish state, as the international media has suggested. Moderate Likudniks had already been convinced that a Palestinian state needed to be established to preserve a Jewish majority in Israel. Instead, what has changed in recent weeks is the realization that the military victory against terrorism and the diplomatic victory against Arafat—both of which seemed imminent last summer and were supposed to have led to the emergence of a credible Palestinian negotiating partner—have proved elusive. In the absence of victory and of serious negotiations, the only option seems to be unilateral withdrawal. A key moment in that realization was the recent killing, by a lone Palestinian gunman, of three soldiers guarding Netzarim; though hardly the worst terrorist attack of recent years, it nevertheless reminded Israelis of the futility in trying to hold on to an isolated settlement in the middle of Gaza. Despite continuing Israeli success in preempting such attacks, the Palestinians clearly are not stopping terrorist activity. As a result, there's a sense of drift

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among Israeli leaders, who only a few months ago were confident that victory was imminent.

In a widely publicized comment in October, a frustrated Yaalon blamed the government for not helping keep the relatively moderate former Palestinian prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, in power. That remark was itself a symptom of confusion: Not long before, I'd heard Yaalon say precisely the opposite at a meeting with several journalists, insisting there was nothing Israel could have done to save Abbas so long as Arafat remained on the scene. For his part, Sharon, faced with a growing corruption scandal that could lead to indictments against him and his two sons, has appeared increasingly listless, leaving Israelis with the sense that no one is quite in control. Instead of the mood of defiance that began with the Passover Massacre last year, Israelis are showing signs of demoralization reminiscent of the intifada's first year. The devastated economy has only deepened the gloom. And so the appeal of unilateral withdrawal comes, in part, from the Israelis' need to reestablish a sense of control over a reality that seems to be unraveling.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, UNILATERAL withdrawal is more popular in Likud than in Labor, which believes that the only long-term solution is a negotiated peace. Labor's nightmare—that unilateral steps will end any possibility of a diplomatic settlement—is precisely what attracts some in Likud, who fear that negotiations will lead to maximal Israeli concessions and minimal Palestinian reciprocity. The Geneva Accord and the international support it generated, notes Steinitz, only intensified that fear. "Geneva proved that the Palestinians aren't ready to give up the demand for refugee return to Israel," he says. Ironically, then, rather than stimulate a return to negotiations, as its architects had hoped, the Accord's success has convinced some Likudniks that a partial, unilateral withdrawal is the only way to forestall their nightmare: withdrawal to the 1967 borders without the Palestinians relinquishing the demand of refugee return to Israel.

Still, the arguments of Likud leaders who oppose unilateral withdrawal—including Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom—are formidable. Besides signaling to the terrorists that they're winning, withdrawal would create a tangible security risk as thousands of Katyusha rockets could be smuggled into the territories and pointed toward Tel Aviv and Ben-Gurion Airport. Nor is the international community likely to allow Israel to annex any part of the West Bank, as Sharon has hinted he may do if negotiations fail. So withdrawal wouldn't end international pressure or terrorist attacks but, rather, leave Israel with less territory to bargain with when the next round of negotiations begins. And, while Steinitz believes his plan for withdrawing first from Gaza would at least forestall the danger of Katyusha attacks from the West Bank, even he is ambivalent. "I know only what's not good for Israel—Geneva on the one hand and Greater Israel on the other," he says. "But who can say for sure what is good for Israel?"

The first experiment in unilateral withdrawal may happen as early as this week, if the Sharon government carries through on its intentions to uproot an illegal West Bank outpost called Migron. Unlike most outposts, which are barely populated, Migron is a thriving community of 40 families. Its rows of mobile homes resemble a settlement from the movement's early years three decades ago. There's a stone building housing a synagogue, a playground, and two kindergartens for the community's 70 children. A wooden sign near the padlocked fence reads, MIGRON WAS ESTABLISHED, DESPITE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES, BECAUSE OF OUR FAITH IN THE ETERNITY OF ISRAEL.

On a recent afternoon, Migron's residents, almost all of them in their twenties, were preparing a tent camp for the thousands of supporters expected to gather here to resist a large contingent of soldiers and police who may come to uproot them. "We're the test case," says Migron's founder, Itai Harel, who grew up in the veteran settlement of Ofra down the road. "If the government succeeds here, then Ofra and Beit El, to say nothing of Netzarim, will be next. But, if thousands of volunteers come to defend Migron, the government will have to back down." Some here are hoping for a Hanukkah miracle or at least a reprieve. On a bulletin board in front of the synagogue, a poster invites everyone to a community celebration of Hanukkah, "which will be held, God willing, next Wednesday." God willing, indeed. By then, the government intends to dismantle the settlement. ■

The CIA gives up.
Spooked

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

WHEN PRESIDENT BUSH announced the capture of Saddam Hussein on Sunday, American intelligence officials received some rare praise. Finding Saddam, the president said, "was based on the superb work of intelligence analysts who found the dictator's footprints in a vast country." It was a long-overdue commendation: The president had given the CIA no such public acknowledgement after its efforts led to the capture or killing of important Al Qaeda figures like Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, Riduan Isamuddin, or Ali Qaed Sinan Al Harthi. And, since the last time Bush so prominently mentioned the intelligence community, he blamed it for misleading statements in his State of the Union address—"I gave a speech to the nation that was cleared by the intelligence services," Bush said in July—his comments this weekend represented a significant change of tone.

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But the president's words come at a time when many at Langley—intelligence analysts especially—remain furious at the Bush administration. And that acrimony is unlikely to be soothed by a few laudatory words. As one well-connected ex-analyst put it, Bush's praise won't "make any effect in the fundamental dynamic" between the CIA and the administration. That dynamic was established during the run-up to the Iraq war, when the intelligence community was pressured, belittled, and circumvented by administration policymakers who preferred receiving intelligence that validated what they already believed. When that process led to embarrassing mistakes—as with the claim in the State of the Union about Iraq seeking uranium from Niger—the administration, with help from its allies in the congressional GOP, promptly hung the CIA out to dry.

If anyone at Langley thought the end of the Iraq war would bring a new relationship with the White House, they were sorely mistaken. Last week, a senior CIA analyst e-mailed a friend to complain of the continued "incompetence and politicization" that has infected the Bush administration's dealings with the intelligence services. Those dealings are provoking several responses among analysts, but all point to a disturbing conclusion: The U.S. intelligence apparatus is seriously damaged as a result of the Iraq war. And few expect anything to change while the Bush team remains in office. "The only solution," says a retired CIA official, "is next November."

THE CIA HAS spent the last several months on the defensive. In October, the chairman of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Pat Roberts of Kansas, told *The Washington Post* the Bush administration had been "ill-served" by the intelligence community's "sloppy" reporting on Iraq, especially the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Since the administration had in some cases ignored CIA objections to its statements about Iraqi WMD—and since Roberts has refused to investigate how the administration used the intelligence in its public case for the war—some at the CIA feel the administration and its congressional allies are making the Agency into a scapegoat. As a former CIA official puts it, "If there's ever a choice between a policy failure and an intelligence failure, guess what?"

On November 28, the Agency fired back. Writing in the *Post*, Stuart A. Cohen, the vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council (NIC)—the body that coordinates joint assessments by the various intelligence agencies—defended the NIE's judgments and the process that yielded them. But, more important, he told the Agency's critics to back off, lest even more intelligence failures be produced by the Iraq tempest. "[A]nalysts laboring under a barrage of allegations will become more and more disinclined to make judgments that go beyond ironclad evidence—a scarce commodity in our business," he explained. "If this is allowed to happen, the nation will be ... ultimately much less secure." Cohen was repeating an argument made by his boss, CIA Director George Tenet, who wrote a stern letter to Roberts suggesting that the senator's criticism would diminish "our willingness to make hard calls on difficult subjects that affect national-security decision-making." And, indeed, *The New York Times* reported that the prediction was panning out: In classified reviews, the NIC has been softening assessments of certain foreign WMD programs to reflect little beyond what hard evidence the intelligence agencies had collected.

At the same time, however, the intelligence community has also been veering in the opposite direction. Last month, Tenet delivered to Congress his biannual report on worldwide WMD proliferation. The section on Syria contained a judgment that no CIA report—certainly not the one covering the previous six months' proliferation—had ever reflected. For the first time, the CIA declared that "we are looking at Syrian nuclear intentions with growing concern." The report worried about "broader access to foreign expertise provid[ing] opportunities to expand [Syria's] indigenous capabilities"—opportunities that previous estimates had noted existed only "in principle"—even though the report also stated that "specific assistance" from Russia, Syria's principal provider of nuclear energy technology, "has not yet materialized."

Moving Syria into the category of potential nuclear threats has been championed for months by Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security (and über-hawk) John Bolton. Intelligence analysts, by and large, had not seen indications of either Syrian intentions of becoming a nuclear power or the capabilities to do so and had until recently been able to ward Bolton off. After Bolton told the House International Relations Committee in June that American officials are "looking at Syria's nuclear program with growing concern," an outraged CIA delivered nearly 40 pages of written objections to the Bush administration and succeeded in delaying further testimony from Bolton on the issue. Now the CIA's own report matches Bolton's analysis practically word for word. When one incredulous former intelligence official contacted a CIA analyst who worked on the assessment to find out why the Agency was blessing Bolton's position, he was told, "Well, it's just [a report] to the Congress, and it's the administration position." Another dubious ex-analyst learned from an active-duty colleague that the intelligence community has not collected any new reporting that changes the equation on Syrian nukes in at least a year. "This is really discouraging," he says. "The administration, having been burned [on Iraq], now seems to be doing the same thing [on Syria]."

The two scenarios—analysts shading down threats and analysts inflating them—are more of a piece than they seem. In both cases, the CIA is searching for the safest political ground while under siege for its perceived failures in Iraq. In the former case, the Agency has learned from the Iraq experience that it alone will pay the price for blown intelligence assessments, and, as Cohen and Tenet warned,

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The Fence

Will the Fence calm the region or exacerbate the conflict?

After more than three years of the intifada, Israel has decided to build a protective fence that would separate "Israel proper" from the "West Bank" and protect its citizens from murderous assaults which so far have caused over 1,000 Jewish deaths.

What are the facts?

A nation at war. Israel is at war—a war imposed on it by its mortal enemies. The Arabs are prepared to do anything at all, including their individual or collective self-immolation to attain their murderous ends. During the last three years, during their so-called Al Aksa intifada, scores of young Palestinians have blown themselves up in order to take as many of the hated Jews as possible with them. They have been most "successful" in that grisly endeavor.

Israel has refrained from inflicting serious punishment on its tormentors. Clearly, Israel's military might would enable it to destroy its enemies quickly, but decency and respect for human life keep it from that. Instead, Israel decided to build a protective Fence, the course of which essentially follows the "green line," the armistice line from the 1948 War of Liberation. The only purpose of the Fence is to keep suicide bombers out of "Israel proper" and to seal it off from Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). The Fence causes inconvenience and hardship for the Arabs. Before the intifada, up to 200,000 of them went daily to their jobs in Israel. Now, that source of income is cut off. More than 50 per cent of its employable men are out of work and unable to feed their families.

> "The corollary of the wise saying that good fences make good neighbors is that bad neighbors require good fences."

The one person guilty of having brought this suffering, this misery on his people is Yasser Arafat, the president of the so-called "Palestinian Authority." World opinion and even our own government prevent Israel from touching this archvillain and from bringing him to justice.

Some misconceptions. It is not clear why so many are opposed to Israel's protective Fence. The radical left is protesting it in noisy rallies all over the world. Some call it a "wall," bringing up odious images of the wall erected by the Soviet Union to prevent mass flights to the West. But the Israeli Fence is not that. Only less than four miles out of the eighty-three miles that have been built so far actually constitute a wall, rather than a fence. The walled portions were built in areas where sniper incidents have occurred.

Another misconception about the Fence is that it intrudes on "Palestinian land." It is true that the Fence—the portions that are now built and the portions that are still to be built—extends in some localities across the "green line." That is only in order to include that small part of the "West Bank" in which about 75 per cent of Israelis beyond the "green line" now live. Some people are in uproar because they argue that Israel has de facto annexed "Palestinian land." But that is nonsense, of course. There is no "Palestinian land." It is only the constant repetition that makes people believe that the "West Bank" belongs to the "Palestinians." Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is part of the Jewish homeland. Any land that Israel might eventually yield to the Arabs to establish some kind of autonomy would be an act of generosity and accommodation unprecedented in world history.

Israel has tremendous expenses for its educational and social needs. No Israeli decision maker would waste money on a fence if the constant atrocity attacks had not made it imperative. If attacks were to stop, the Fence project could be immediately halted. Those who oppose the Fence and refer to it as an "apartheid wall" either do not understand the horror that suicide terrorists inflict on Israel's civilian population or they do not wish Israel well. But if the Arabs would abandon their obsession to obliterate the Jewish state, and once they demonstrated that they truly wished to live in peace with Israel and participate in its prosperity and booming economy, the Fence could be torn down in no time at all. But that happy day seems far away.

What is wrong with a fence? We have a 70-mile-long fence—ultimately to be lengthened to 330 miles—snaking along the Mexican border. Its purpose is not to keep murderous intruders at bay, but to prevent people looking for work from entering our country. How can we then ask the Israelis not to build a fence to protect the lives of their citizens? The Gaza Strip is and has been for years surrounded by such a fence. Not a single suicide attacker has ever been able to cross into Israel from Gaza, while, with devastating "success," hundreds have been able to cross the open border of the "West Bank." And then there was the "good fence" between Lebanon and Israel, which for many years Lebanese workers could daily cross into Israel and earn their livelihood. The corollary of the wise saying that good fences make good neighbors is that bad neighbors require good fences. And surely, the Arab terrorists are the very worst neighbors that could happen to Israel.

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that makes analysts less prone to interpretive judgment. In the latter, the administration paid no price for pressuring analysts over Iraq, and so analysts appear to be modifying their views in response to continuing pressure. CIA Spokeswoman Michele Neff rejects this assessment, calling dissonance between the CIA and the Bush administration an "urban myth" that is "largely promoted by outsiders who do not understand what is going on." But not everyone agrees. "I am afraid that there's a lot of a you-can't-beat-them kind of attitude, so [analysts] give them what they want," says a retired CIA analyst. "People will talk kind of sanctimoniously about the integrity of the analytical process and everything, but, at the end of the day, politics and politicization has infected it."

In short, the result of administration pressure, in both cases, is bad intelligence. Adds Steven Aftergood, an intelligence policy expert at the Federation of American Scientists, "What I sense is going on is an attempt by analysts to recalibrate, to use a Rumsfeldian term, to the new political environment: that you don't go too far out on a limb, you don't deviate too far from the direction that the political winds are blowing. And, to the extent that that is true, what it means is that the intelligence function is threatened, because the whole purpose of intelligence is to warn you of things you don't already know."

The antagonism between the CIA and the Bush administration is creeping into dealings between analysts and their bosses at Langley as well. Some analysts are simmering over the *inability*—or unwillingness—of their superiors to defend them from the incursions of policymakers. The senior analyst's e-mail complained that, at Langley, "there's *no critical thinking, no accountability*, no adult supervision, no checks on political manipulation—and strong disincentives to having any of them." One major disincentive, explains a former Agency official, is a sense of careerism that has been a long-standing problem within the Directorate of Intelligence (D.I.): "The D.I. is more political and more ambition-driven." One retired CIA official observes that, "within the building, there's a complete breakdown and lack of trust between senior management, by and large, and the analysts, aggravated more than perhaps anytime in the last thirty years." The combination of feeling assaulted by the Bush administration and feeling that their bosses have turned a blind eye to the abuse is leading some analysts to seek uncontroversial assignments.

Not all CIA analysts are throwing in the towel, of course. Many do their job with a high degree of professionalism and with pride, as Neff puts it, "in never bending our judgments to fit a policy course of action." A few have even sought outside advice about how to resist pressure. George Allen—a retired Vietnam analyst who stood up to attempted politicization by Lyndon Johnson's national security adviser Walt Rostow and the military—says he has been getting calls from CIA officials trying to ensure that the intelligence on postwar Iraq stays unvarnished. "They are trying to reinforce each other in holding the line, keeping people's feet to the fire on this issue," the 77-year-old Allen says. (Allen adds that he doesn't think these analysts "were confronted with [politicization] at all" and merely considered it a theoretical problem; but one skeptical retired official wonders, "If there's no pressure, why would you be concerned about pressure?") "The war has broken out," an ex-CIA official says. "It's an undeclared war, but it's a conflict right now where the intelligence analysts in particular feel that they are in the crosshairs. The first human response in such situations is self-defense. And the essence of that self-defense is, if they're shooting at you, hunker down—and, if they ain't looking, sucker punch them."

Which is a prescription for continued dysfunction in the intelligence community. And, with urgent security threats obscured in secrecy—the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, the attempted assassination this week of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, and, of course, Al Qaeda—it's not a dysfunction the United States can afford. As an ex-CIA official bluntly puts it, "We can't fight this war without good intelligence. We can't fight any war—not the war on terror, not anything." Nothing but each other, anyway. ■

How to try Saddam Hussein.
Unpunishable

BY SAMANTHA POWER

In a 1946 letter to Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt wrote of the impossibility of tailoring a judicial process to fit the Nazi horrors. "The Nazi crimes ... explode the limits of the law," the German philosopher (and then-exile) wrote her mentor. "[T]his guilt, in contrast to all criminal guilt, oversteps and shatters any and all legal systems. ... We are simply not equipped to deal, on a human, political level, with a guilt that is beyond crime and an innocence that is beyond goodness or virtue." Jaspers responded by chiding Arendt for ascribing a kind of "greatness" to Nazi crimes. "It seems to me that we have to see things in their total banality, in their prosaic triviality," he wrote, "because that's what truly characterizes them. Bacteria can cause epidemics that wipe out nations, but they remain merely bacteria." It was in this exchange that Arendt began mulling the concept for which she would become best-known.

Before December 13, 2003, it would have been hard to imagine Saddam Hussein—the man who butchered his daughters' spouses, sprayed deadly chemical poisons that

Samantha Power is the author of "A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide, *which won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction.*

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peel off human skin, and chopped off the tongues of potential critics—as banal. Because of his personal, hands-on relationship with murder and mutilation, Saddam was anything but a cog in the machine. He was the machine—a machine that chewed up and spit out its own cogs. But, as it does with most of those who end up in chains, and certainly with those who spend months co-habitating with mice, imprisonment has a way of making even the once-petrifying and mighty seem small.

Saddam's frail, dazed, Ted Kaczynski–like visage was a mesmerizing, potent analgesic for American and Iraqi nerves frayed by months of daily insurgent attacks. But the drama of the dictator's capture faded quickly, supplanted by the singularly perplexing question: "Now what?" What should the American and Iraqi authorities do with a man who—with his massacres, his torture chambers, his cross-border invasions, and his plundering—has exploded the limits of the law? Most Iraqis and one American president are currently focused on retribution (read: execution). But the punishment of Saddam will ultimately be less important than the judicial process that precedes it. And, although the United States will certainly be one of justice's many masters in Saddam's trial, it must subordinate its interests to those of the Iraqi people. The most important considerations should be those that all too rarely guide war crimes trials: How can the tribunal best empower, enlighten, and comfort those who will shape the future of the country?

FOR THE TRIAL to address these considerations, it must be held on Iraqi soil. The U.N. tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have a lot to teach about the downsides of remote justice. To their credit, the U.N. courts have convicted and incapacitated some of the twentieth century's most ghastly thugs (most of whom would otherwise remain at large). But what they have offered in international legitimacy and procedural propriety, they have lacked in local relevance. Victims and survivors find them painfully slow. Despite spending more than half a billion dollars, the Rwanda court has tried just 19 men since its founding in 1994. The Yugoslav court, which has cost some $700 million, has by contrast been a paragon of efficiency, having tried more than 40 since it was established a decade ago. But even the Milosevic trial, which was once touted as the trial of the century, will soon drag into its third year.

Because the courts are located in the Hague and in Arusha, Tanzania—many miles from the scene of the crimes they're judging—and because the sessions are often tedious and rarely broadcast back home, survivors, bystanders, and fellow perpetrators pay almost no attention. (Contrast this with the Israelis who sat glued to their radios during the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem.) Worse, the U.N. Rwanda tribunal actually paid several suspected *genocidaire* as defense investigators—a mistake no Rwandan human resource department would have made—perhaps permanently alienating what should have been a captive Rwandan audience. And, because these international courts have had to cater to their multinational personnel, they have been far quicker to translate indictments and judgments into French and English than into Serbo-Croatian and Kinyarwanda.

Fortunately for the Iraqi people, three days before Saddam's arrest, the Iraqi Governing Council announced the establishment of a national tribunal. The Council even chose a site: Saddam Hussein's Baghdad Gift Museum, which once housed the opulent presents given to Saddam by the many heads of state who came wooing him. President Bush—who is cool on international courts anyway and who now needs desperately to expose the crimes of Saddam's regime (the best remaining justification for the war) and to showcase displays of Iraqi sovereignty—is unlikely to push for a foreign venue.

But, in their mutual eagerness to see Saddam tried in an Iraqi court, neither the Bush administration nor the current Iraqi authorities should regard the terms of the statute that established the tribunal as fixed. The law was prepared by the Council's 25 members, all of whom were handpicked by the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority. Neither the statute nor, by implication, the court has been vetted by the Iraqi people. The rules and objectives of the court must be reopened for debate so as to maximize Iraqi ownership of the trials it conducts. If not, the Iraqi public will not be prepared when the limits and trade-offs inherent in the judicial process reveal themselves.

WHATEVER THE FAULTS or growing pains of the U.N. courts, the Iraqi statute should in fact be revised to invite foreign participation. In an ideal world, for the sake of full-fledged local empowerment, the court would be comprised strictly of Iraqi judges and lawyers. An international tribunal may have been essential for the Nazis because the majority of Hitler's crimes were committed against non-Germans and because the German legal system had been so corrupted, but Saddam struck mostly against his own, and Iraqis should decide his fate.

But, alas, Iraqis don't reside in an ideal world, and foreign involvement will be essential. The simple reason is that finding a batch of independent, respected, homegrown lawyers to staff the bench and the prosecutor's office will be extremely difficult. Most prosecutors and judges in Iraq today are tainted—tainted because they served in the Baathist regime, because they were brutalized by it (how can a regime's victims impartially try its perpetrators?), or because they fled and are Iraqi exiles, seen by some to be American stooges. Even if enough acceptable lawyers were found, very few would have experience prosecuting or presiding over criminal trials of this complexity—trials that will cover the past 35 years and require interviewing hundreds of witnesses, reviewing thousands of pages of records, and gathering forensic data from the estimated 260 mass graves scattered throughout the country. Foreign participation can

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erase the appearance of victims' justice and help assure the fairness and quality of the trials by employing judges who cut their teeth presiding over the Byzantine war crimes trials of the '90s.

There is at least one encouraging precedent for mixing foreign and domestic jurists. The trial chamber of the hybrid court in Sierra Leone contains one Sierra Leonean appointee and two U.N. appointees—one African (from Cameroon) and one Canadian. The Appeals Chamber contains three U.N. and two Sierra Leonean positions. In Iraq, for the sake of local legitimacy, the balance should be reversed in favor of Iraqi nationals, with three judges hailing from Iraq and two from outside. Non-Western judges, such as Khalida Rachid Khan from Pakistan, who serves on the Rwanda court, and Mehmet Guney from Turkey, who works for both the Rwanda and Yugoslav tribunals, as well as judges from the region, such as Amin el Mahdi from Egypt, who serves at the Yugoslav court, should be especially encouraged to apply.

Iraqis will be empowered and not insulted by internationalization if it is they who make the foreign appointments. If the few international judgeships were handed out on the same basis as Iraqi reconstruction contracts ("to the occupiers go the spoils"), then the tarnish of victims' justice would only be replaced by that of victors' justice. Because the United Nations is considered by Iraqis to be implicated in the sanctions policy of the '90s, the diplomats in Turtle Bay should not select judges for possible appointment. Rather, interested international jurists should apply directly to the Iraqi regime that will succeed the Governing Council in July.

BUT, EVEN IF its staff includes seasoned foreign professionals, the Iraq court will need time to get its sea legs. There is, of course, great temptation to rush Saddam to justice. Two days after his arrest, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council said he expected the trial to take place "in the next few weeks" and to lead to swift conviction and execution. The faster Saddam can be tried, the thinking goes, the quicker the Iraqis can be reassured that their erstwhile leader will never return to power and can thus begin building a post-Saddam society. Moreover, the faster he is tried, the lower the likelihood that he will die in captivity—either of natural causes (seven months of bobbing among 30 holes can't be easy on a 66-year-old) or of suicide, as Hermann Goering managed in Allied custody after World War II and as Saddam must surely have contemplated.

Still, those eager to tie the hangman's noose should note the extent to which even the well-funded U.N. tribunals, filled with practiced specialists in international criminal law, bungled their early cases, litigating extraneous, time-consuming facts and issuing shoddy indictments that later had to be scrapped. The Iraqi court will make its own mistakes, and, despite the risks of delaying the country's trial to end all trials, the proceedings will be too closely watched and cherished to risk the rush. In fact, Saddam should not be the first Iraqi in the dock—it would be better to botch the prosecution of the six of hearts than the ace of spades.

By slowing down, the authorities will also have a chance of shoring up local security and developing a witness protection program. Iraqi society is so divided that, while the trial of Saddam may eventually create a shared and cathartic record of his mayhem, it will also illuminate the society's religious, ethnic, and political divisions, triggering violent demonstrations and encouraging resistance. It is almost impossible to conceive of how a police force that can't yet protect itself from suicide bombers will be able to convincingly assure those already brutalized by Saddam that their testimony will not lead to their further victimization. A witness protection program, complete with counseling for those who agree to relive the hell of the past, has to be a key component of any tribunal.

ALTHOUGH THE BUSH administration has identified its most wanted by issuing the card deck, it is the Iraqi court that should decide whom it will try. So far, no limit has been set on the number of Iraqis who will be judged along with Saddam. Because the statute covers crimes committed from 1968 until 2003, the court could conceivably make its way up or down the chain of command and operate indefinitely. But, once atrocities on this scale have been committed and allowed, any justice mechanism introduced must be selective. At present, coalition officials are holding 5,500 security detainees across Iraq. An effort to try them all would be immensely destabilizing and would dilute the quality of the justice dispensed.

A clear cap should be set on the number of suspects to be prosecuted (even Nuremberg tried only 22 leading Nazis). Otherwise, the court may contribute to, rather than diminish, the local fondness for vengeance. For those who do not make the hit list, a truth commission that invites testimony in exchange for amnesty should supplement the tribunal, allowing Iraqis to come forward to testify to the terror and indignity they endured, to receive public recognition for their suffering, to create a public record of everyday horrors, and to aid in society-wide de-Baathification.

The only predictable outcome of the Iraq trial is that nobody—in Iraq, in the United States, in the Middle East, and in the international public gallery at large—will find it suited to the gravity and barbarity of Saddam's assault on humanity. As Arendt wrote several years after her exchange with Jaspers, "Totalitarian regimes have discovered without knowing it that there are crimes which men can neither punish nor forgive. When the impossible was made possible, it became the unpunishable, unforgivable absolute evil which ... anger could not revenge, [and] love could not endure." Saddam Hussein made the impossible possible, but his citizens and successors now have the chance to do the same. If Iraqis can emerge from the coming trials with the dignity, wisdom, and commitment to the rule of law that Saddam denied them, that will be their greatest revenge. ■

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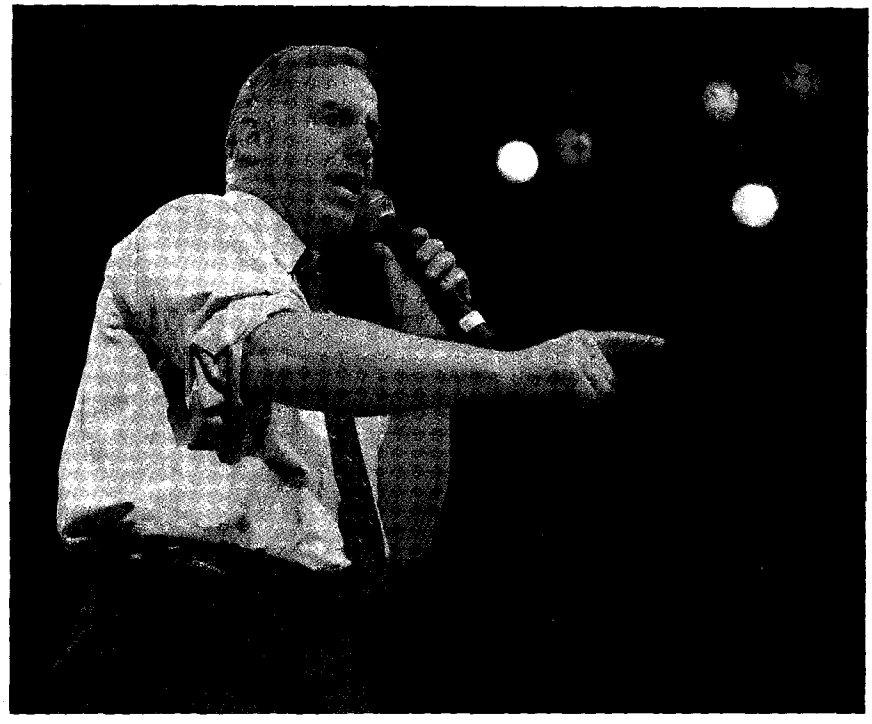
Howard Dean's religion problem.

Beyond Belief

BY FRANKLIN FOER



Howard Dean's ambivalent spiritual narrative would likely pose problems under any circumstances. But, in 2004, it could play straight into Karl Rove's hands.

TALK TO SENSIBLE Howard Dean supporters these days, and they'll tell you that the former governor's campaign to date has been a grand sleight of hand. Sure, it has harnessed Bush hatred and antiwar fervor. But the real Dean isn't a frothing lefty like his supporters; he's a closet centrist. Once he finishes exploiting the left's anger to seal the nomination, he will reveal his true self, elegantly pivoting to the middle. As *The Washington Post*'s Dan Balz and Jim VandeHei put it in early December, "[Dean] has provided [himself] ample room to modify his image."

On paper, there is a good reason to believe this strategy could work. For all his red-meat, liberal rhetoric, Dean hasn't committed himself to many policy positions that can be portrayed as far left—unlike, say, Richard Gephardt, with his massive $230 billion health care plan. After the primaries are over, Dean will be able to emphasize his commitment to fiscal discipline, his opposition to gun control, and even the hawkish streak in his foreign policy prior to 2002. (Dean was a rare Democratic supporter of the first Gulf war.) The problem is that, no matter how much he talks about these authentically centrist impulses, Dean will still have a hard time selling himself as a moderate. It's not just his opposition to the war—though that may pose more of a problem now that Saddam Hussein has been captured. No, the real reason Dean will not be able to escape a liberal caricature has little to do with policy and everything to do with a warning flag that will mark him as culturally alien to much of the country: Howard Dean is one of the most secular candidates to run for president in modern history.

Dean himself is frank on this point, perhaps too frank. "[I] don't go to church very often," the Episcopalian-turned-Congregationalist remarked in a debate last month. "My religion doesn't inform my public policy." When Dean talks about organized religion, it is often in a negative context. "I don't want to listen to the fundamentalist preachers anymore," he shouted at the California Democratic Convention in March. And, when he discusses spirituality, it is generally divorced from any mention of God or church. "We are not cogs in a corporate machine," he preached last month in Iowa. "We are human, spiritual beings who deserve better consideration as human beings than we're getting from this administration."

One day, a truly secular candidate might be able to run for president without suffering at the polls. But that day won't be soon. This is, for better or worse, an openly religious country that prefers its politicians to be openly religious, too—a trend that has only become more pronounced in recent national elections. A 2000 poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 70 percent of Americans want their president to be a person of faith. This religious vote isn't just concentrated in Southern states that a Democrat has no chance of carrying. It also saturates the Midwest, where Dean would have to win to have a chance at the presidency. (According to the American Religious Identification Survey, only about 15 percent of respondents in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois describe themselves as nonreligious.) Indeed, in the last five presidential elections, the candidate who more aggressively conveyed his religiosity (whether honestly or not so hon-

JIM RUYMEN/REUTERS LIVE PHOTOS

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estly) won. Seen in this light, a popular contest between Dean's secularism and George W. Bush's heartfelt faith could be, well, no contest. And the same, in turn, could be true of the election.

DEAN, TO BE fair, recognizes the need to provide some sort of narrative of his faith—an answer to Bush's story of Billy Graham–inspired redemption from alcoholism. For Dean, the road to Damascus goes around Lake Champlain. In 1980, Dean, then a practicing doctor in Burlington, caught wind that a local real estate developer was planning to build a pair of high-rise condominiums on the shore of the lake. For most of its recent history, the shorefront had been an industrial wasteland; now, it was going to become a haven for avaricious developers, without any public access. Along with a Burlington lawyer named Rick Sharp, Dean began to campaign against the project, proposing in its place a scenic nine-mile bike trail. "He became a crusader," says Sharp. Dean went door to door with leaflets; he stood in the street with petitions; he cleared brush and laid bricks.

The early '80s were a time when progressives dominated Burlington politics, having even stuck a socialist in city hall. Dean and his crusaders tapped this raw liberalism and turned the real estate developers into a communal bête noire, killing the condo project in 1981. Then, the hard part began: getting the land for the bike trail—a fight that ultimately wound its way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Part of the struggle involved convincing the local Episcopal diocese to cede ownership of a stretch of old railroad tracks that ran across their property. When the church first resisted, threatening to join a lawsuit, "Howard went to talk to them into it," says Sharp. Thanks to Dean's persistence, the Episcopalians eventually succumbed. But their initial resistance left a bad taste in Dean's mouth. As Dean has described it in recent months, the dispute over the bike path caused him to break with the Episcopal Church and become a Congregationalist.

As conversion stories go, Dean's hardly conforms to the conventions of the genre. Rather than show how religion helped him to change his life—see, again, Bush overcoming the bottle—it shows how a conflict in everyday life made Dean change his religion. Not only is the role of religion in the story subsidiary; it's also essentially negative. More important still, Dean's spiritual narrative is, well, not very spiritual. His moment of truth has nothing to do with God or theology or personal faith; rather, it's about local politics. It's hard to imagine this story will resonate with religious voters, because very few people would untether themselves from their spiritual home over a bike path. Indeed, when Dean first explained his denominational switch on ABC's "This Week," George Stephanopoulos was incredulous: "Over the bike path?" Most people respond that way, even Dean's friends and family. My questions about the centrality of the bike path take them by surprise. "I have never heard that before," says his brother James Dean. "I had another reporter ask me that, but he never told me that at the time," remembers Sharp.

Whatever the reason for Dean's decision to switch denominations, it was part of what seems to have been a personal journey away from organized religion altogether. For generations, Dean's family members were stalwarts of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in East Hampton, New York. His father had served as the church warden. And, every Sunday until his thirteenth birthday, Dean attended St. Luke's himself. "When we were about thirteen," says James, "Dad said, 'We're not going to make you go to church anymore.'" When Howard Dean stopped attending church, it wasn't just rebellion against his devout father. It was a sign of the times. During the 1950s and 1960s, mainline Protestantism lost its grip on the elite. In a courageous act of noblesse oblige, the elite had democratized its schools and universities and given them a secular, nondenominational tint. But, in the process of secularizing these institutions, they ruined their prime instruments for inculcating Protestantism. Once upon a time, Dean's prep school, St. George's in Newport, Rhode Island, might have given him a healthy dose of "muscular Christianity." Instead, his theology classes consisted of lessons in ethics and a more "literary" reading of the Bible.

Dean's decision to join the Congregationalists in 1982 didn't just coincide with his bike-path fight with the Episcopal Church. It also coincided with his first campaign for the state legislature. Like all American politicians, even in progressive Burlington, he needed a spiritual mailing address. As he shopped around for churches, it was natural that he turned to Congregationalism, a denomination famous for its informality and liberal stances. Last November, Dean told a reporter from the *Forward* that he liked that "there is no central authority" in the tradition. By the time Dean joined the church, Congregationalists had already authorized the ordination of gay ministers. Yoga is taught in the church. Sermons sometimes make the case for lefty causes, especially the plight of the Palestinians. (Last June, a sermon at Dean's own Congregationalist church blared, "The real violence is the violence of the occupation of Israel to over three million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.")

Dean's decision to switch churches is not the only way in which his religious journey progressed from more to less structured—or in which he mimicked his class as a whole. Soon after the Protestant elites had opened their institutions, they opened their families, with intermarriage becoming common in the 1970s and '80s. "New England Protestants have assimilated Catholics and Jews. We are constantly searching for a combination of rituals and doctrines. We're not afraid to cherry-pick," says Peter Hall, a Harvard professor who studies religious politics. So, when Dean married a Jewish woman, Judith Steinberg, in 1981, nobody paid much notice. (His father, after all, had married a Catholic.) The new Dean family would celebrate

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Christmas and Passover. Religion in the household became not only nontraditional but extremely casual. As Dean put it at a candidate forum in November, "We go to temple once in a while, and, last time I went, we got a lecture about Jews that only go to temple on high holy days, just like I used to get a lecture at the Congregational church about Christians that only go to church on Christmas and Easter." As James Dean told me, "[Religion] is just not something we really talk about."

DEAN'S AMBIVALENT SPIRITUAL narrative would likely pose problems for him on the national level under any circumstances. But, in 2004, it could play straight into Karl Rove's hands. Rove has been surprisingly blunt about the centrality of faith in his electoral calculus. In 2001, he told an audience at the American Enterprise Institute that the previous election had been so close for only one reason: evangelicals. "Four million of them failed to turn out and vote," Rove explained. Ever since Bush entered office, Rove has been obsessed with altering this result. *Newsweek* describes the evangelical vote as "the primary demographic objective of [Bush-Cheney 2004]." In pursuit of this objective, Rove has dispatched Ralph Reed, of Christian Coalition fame, to manage campaign operations in the Southeast (read: Florida); the Southern Baptist Convention will plaster its churches with voting guides.

But successfully turning out the evangelical vote is far from inevitable. That's because there has been a decade-long trend of Christian conservatives retreating from the political activism of the mid-'90s. In part, this is a consequence of the decay of the Christian Coalition and other organizations that stoked evangelical participation. And, in part, it is a consequence of Bush's political strategy. Even as he has tried to throw bones to evangelicals, pushing pet issues like African slavery and his faith-based initiative, he has studiously avoided culture-war hot buttons that might upset moderates. He tried to split the difference on stem cells, struck a relatively moderate tone on gays, and has largely steered clear of talk about abortion.

But, by keeping the culture war from flaring up, he has created an environment in which religious-right voting drives could have a hard time gaining traction. "Evangelicals are populists," says University of Virginia sociologist James Davison Hunter. "They participate in politics when they feel embattled, when they feel like the culture is out to destroy the way of life they cherish. Right now, they don't feel that." But, he says, Dean could make them feel embattled. Indeed, he already has. In Vermont, when Dean signed the civil-unions bill in 2000, he became a target for social-conservative activists. Operation Rescue's Randall Terry and groups from as far away as Kansas made their way to Vermont so they could denounce Dean to his face. And that's not Dean's only vulnerability. Because he served on the Northern New England board of Planned Parenthood, he has become a favorite source of ire for anti-abortion groups, too. LifeNews.com warns that he may be the "most pro-abortion candidate."

Far from tamping down this animosity, Dean appears to revel in it. Not content to take on Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson by name—as John McCain did after the South Carolina primary—Dean went after the entire category of "fundamentalist preachers" at the California Democratic Convention. When talking about the social issues that matter most to evangelicals, he doesn't even make a pretense of respecting their side. Describing the debate over partial-birth abortion, he told NARAL Pro-Choice America last January that "this is an issue about nothing; it's an issue about extremism." On the subject of civil unions, he has lambasted his opponents for "unchristian" behavior. When I asked conservative activist Gary Bauer about Republican plans for exploiting such statements, he told me, "The Republican Party can write the direct mail in their sleep." A former Christian Coalition official concurs: "This is the opponent that Ralph [Reed] dreamed of. He will be a kid in the candy store."

Dean's problem isn't just that he will bring GOP evangelicals to the polls but that he could also lose the evangelicals who have voted Democratic in recent elections. Polling done by the scholars John Green, Lyman Kellstedt, James Guth, and Corwin Smidt has broken down the white evangelical voting bloc into four groups—highly traditional, traditional, centrist, and modernist. While Republicans dominate the two traditionalist groups, they have basically split the centrist and modernist ones with the Democrats. And, while these more moderate evangelicals don't make up an overwhelming percentage of the electorate—only about 8 percent—they happen to be heavily concentrated in the Midwest. According to Kellstedt, these are voters Democrats often win with an economic agenda, but Dean might lose "on the basis of religious style points and strident rhetoric on [social issues]." And, in a close election, a few thousand votes squandered in Iowa and Illinois could ruin Dean.

If the problem were only evangelicals, maybe Dean could survive. But, as the sociologist Alan Wolfe argues in his new book, *The Transformation of American Religion*, "There's also a sense in which we are all evangelicals now." By which he means all U.S. religions—from Catholicism to Islam—have adopted a style of worship that in important ways resembles evangelicalism, especially its emphasis on the "intimate and personal sides of faith." This shift to an evangelical mode of discourse has altered politics as well. Before Jimmy Carter came along, postwar politics had been largely devoid of religion, aside from John F. Kennedy's efforts to diffuse the controversy over his Catholicism. But Carter changed all that. Importing evangelical personal testimony, he felt free to describe his faith, right down to the lust "in my heart." Since his 1976 victory, presidential politics has been filled with such testimonials. Candidates' spiritual lives have literally become open books: The 200-page *The Faith of George W. Bush* by Stephen Mansfield can be found on the front

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table at your neighborhood Barnes & Noble.

It's common for liberals to complain that Bush talks about religion too much. But few Americans agree. Recent polling by Pew shows that only 14 percent think Bush talks about his faith too much. The vast majority, 62 percent, like the way he deploys religion, and 11 percent think he doesn't invoke it enough. This is one reason there's little hope of Dean riding a secular backlash into the White House, but it is not the only one. Although the number of Americans who attend church less than once per year is growing, it is still at 30 percent, a decided minority. According to the pollster John Zogby, "Appealing to secular voters might help you win a Democratic primary—but that's it." The University of Akron's John Green, the pollster who has looked the hardest at the electoral implications of religion, argues that voters "are looking for signs that they can trust a candidate. One of the things that they are looking for, one of the things that makes sense to them, is religiosity. If they don't see it, they may have a hard time voting for a candidate."

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, Michael Dukakis, another secular New England governor who ran for president and one of the few recent candidates as secular as Dean. As his wife, Kitty, admitted in 1987, "None of us is very religious." Dukakis's opponent, George H.W. Bush, might not have been any more religious—at least not in a publicly expressive, evangelical way. But he had spent eight years watching as Ronald Reagan ended every speech with the phrase "God bless America" and stuffed religious imagery into every rhetorical corner. Bush could see the adoration such pronouncements brought from Christian conservatives. As he campaigned for president, he tried gamely to ape his boss. Speaking to ministers from Bob Jones University, he used the evangelical formulation "I believe in Jesus Christ as my personal savior."

The 1988 campaign is remembered for Bush's attacks on Dukakis's patriotism and Massachusetts-liberal instincts. But, rereading Bush's fusillades, it becomes clear that these arguments had a unifying theme: Dukakis's godlessness. When Bush blasted Dukakis for making the Pledge of Allegiance optional, he was really talking about the phrase "one nation under God"—a phrase evangelicals cherished as one of the few permissible references to the deity in public school. When he derided Dukakis's membership in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), he tried to make a similar point about his opponent's embrace of secularity. "I don't think [the ACLU] is right to try to take the tax exemption away from the Catholic Church," Bush bellowed in one debate. "I don't want to see 'under God' come out from our currency." The attacks worked wonders. As Garry Wills wrote in *Under God: Religion and American Politics*, "For many Americans, the coldly technological 'Massachusetts miracle' was not only godless but the enemy of God." This perception enabled Bush to run up amazing numbers among evangelicals—77 percent of their vote—en route to a 39-state general-election victory.

Fortunately for the Democrats, there's a counterpoint to the Dukakis story. Four years after that disastrous campaign, Bill Clinton, also running against the elder Bush, made his faith a central part of his political persona. At the 1992 Democratic convention, Linda Bloodworth-Thomason's biographical film showed Roger Clinton telling the camera, "Church-going was really important to the two of us. ... Even to this day, it's an extremely significant part of his life." In his acceptance speech, Bill Clinton described his program as a "new covenant" and quoted from Corinthians. Where Dukakis and Walter Mondale had resolutely avoided churches and other religious settings, Clinton and Al Gore sought them out. In an interview on the VISN Christian cable network, he sat in a West Virginia church directly in front of the altar: "If I didn't believe in God, if I weren't, in my view, a Christian, if I didn't believe ultimately in the perfection of life after death, my life would have been much more difficult for me."

Moreover, because Clinton hailed from the relatively conservative Baptist Church (as opposed to the liberal Congregationalists), he understood how to paper over differences with voters who disliked his positions on social issues, especially abortion. "With Clinton, evangelical voters no longer felt like they were locked in a battle against a secular Democratic Party," says the University of Virginia's Hunter. By the end of the campaign, Clinton and Gore seemed sincere enough that the *Associated Baptist Press* trumpeted them as "the first all-Baptist ticket for the nation's two highest offices." George H.W. Bush's share of the evangelical vote fell from 77 percent in 1988 to 56 percent in 1992. As a result, Clinton nearly swept the border states and made important inroads in the South.

Indeed, a case can be made that the Democrats' recent presidential success with Southern candidates is only secondarily connected to their geographic roots. Candidates who grow up in the South come from a world steeped in Jesus. Even if they don't buy the theology themselves, they intuitively understand the role that faith plays in people's lives; they have absorbed enough of the lingo to plausibly pass for religious or at least avoid offending the faithful.

Dean, on the other hand, utterly lacks this gift. In a CNN interview last week, Judy Woodruff asked him about his bike-path conversion. She seemed bemused over the story. "Was it just over a bike path that you left the Episcopal Church?" Dean told her, "Yes, as a matter of fact, it was." He explained how the diocese had resisted handing over the land for the trail. "One thing I feel about religion, you have to be very careful not to be a hypocrite if you're a religious person. It is really tough to preach one thing and do something else. And I don't think you can do that." As the discussion continued, Woodruff asked, "And you don't believe, governor, the Republicans are going to have a field day with comments like these?" Dean replied with unwitting clarity: "The Republicans always have a field day with things like this." Yes, they do. ■

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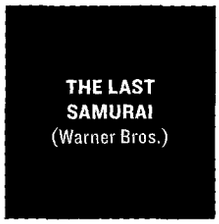
BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Culture Clashes

EDWARD ZWICK HAS ONCE again been misled by Edward Zwick. The first Zwick is the director who made *Glory*, an increment to the world's film treasury, and who lavished cinematic beauty on such otherwise wobbly films as *Legends of the Fall* and *The Siege*. That director has now made **THE LAST SAMURAI**, a film replete with visual riches, about an American in the Japan of 1876. Zwick has long been enthralled by one of the older, always fertile film possibilities: the contrast of space and men, eternal landscapes and temporal human trafficking. Here that contrast recurs and recurs, rendered exquisitely by John Toll's camera, along with mist as a complement in a battle scene, pelting rain treated as a condition of continuing life, battalions of soldiers stretched so far that they seem to certify the curve of the Earth's surface. And Zwick has of course loved the grace of Japanese buildings and gardens.



THE LAST SAMURAI
(Warner Bros.)

If only the other Zwick, the one who co-writes some of his screenplays and judges all those that he directs, were up to this level. Zwick Number Two, the scenarist, always looks for serious subjects but too often seems to ache with what pool players call body English. He keeps yearning for the screenplay to roll along better than it does, to fulfill its theme, but he does not really control it. *The Last Samurai*, written by John Logan, Marshall Herskovitz, and Zwick, was patently intended to be a serious exploration of a cultural encounter, but this intent withers through a lack of writers' gravity and a mass of action clichés.

Nathan Algren is an ex-captain in the Union Army who, after the Civil War, becomes a boozer and supports his boozing by appearing in a show where he sells a new sort of rifle. (Flashes of war memories punctuate his thinking here and through the picture.) A Japanese minister of state engages him to come to Tokyo to organize and train the emperor's army. Algren was suggested for the job by his former colonel, who is also going, yet who detests him as much as vice versa. Why the colonel should have proposed Algren, and why the minister should have wanted this boozer, are quick bows to script necessity.

The training of the emperor's troops proceeds, with predictable comedy. As he teaches, however, Algren learns about Japanese martial arts. (Not as quickly as Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill—Vol. I*, but still speedily enough.) Then comes a battle between the army and a troop led by a warlord, the samurai Katsumoto. Algren kills an opponent but is himself wounded. Katsumoto captures him and decides to spare him, to take him along as a prisoner.

Now comes the gist of the story, the relationship between the noble Katsumoto and the courageous but cynical Algren. The captain recovers, learns more about swordplay, is cared for by Taka, the samurai's sister. She is the widow of the man whom Algren killed in battle, which puts a fold in the story that might be rewarding but is so inadequately treated that it is only plot décor. Living in Katsumoto's mountain fastness, Algren discovers a code, one that is related to the code that he has lived by but that extends it. Algren is a professional solder, and in a way regrets that he can no longer live by soldierly standards; Katsumoto is a kind of knight, whose whole life—in war and elsewhere—is governed by the samurai code.

It is not necessary to have seen Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* or *Yojimbo* to understand that code, although it would help. The basic difference from Western behavior is clear. Algren, like any good solder, has lived by courage, a courage meant to help him survive. For Katsumoto, courage is the means by which one can achieve an honorable death. The samurai is not suicidal; he wants to excel in conflict, but he knows that whether he conquers or falls, he cannot lose if he behaves honorably. Algren responds to the rigor and arch of the samurai's bearing. The American seems to feel that, in an otherwise corrupting world, he has found something solid. History has arranged an irony in the matter: at about this time, the samurai class is being abolished by the Japanese government, and the film breathes a scent of farewell. Is Katsumoto the last of the order? Perhaps he hopes that Algren will be. Yet the very ending of the film doubts that, no matter what Algren has learned, he will live as a samurai.

But screenwriter Zwick and his colleagues were apparently timorous about exploring the cultural and moral avenues of the situation. This has to be a movie, they apparently decided. So across their theme, which—by imaginative analogy—is relevant to our own lives, Zwick has splotched a lot of battle stuff, much too much, most of it routine. And some of it is muzzy. I had thought Katsumoto was a rebel whom the government was out to subdue, but he turns out to be devoted to the throne.

One shortcoming of the film comes from Zwick Number One, the director. He has rented Tom Cruise Incorporated and turned him loose. Cruise plays Algren and does not do much more about it than supply the face and smile and anger that have become his stock in trade. He was once an extraordinary actor. This is the man who, to choose a few, burned up the screen in *Born on the Fourth of July*, created a true character metamorphosis in *Rain Man*, and was movingly substantial in *A Few Good Men* and *Jerry Maguire*, but who has now narrowed his ambition and increased his starriness. (A third *Mission Impossible* is in process.) Director Zwick apparently had little interest or success in digging out the real actor who must still reside somewhere in Cruise.

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Katsumoto is played by Ken Watanabe, a well-known Japanese actor who, tall and dignified, is credible. Some commentators, possibly influenced by the subject and by consequent memories of Toshiro Mifune, the stupendous actor in many Kurosawa films, have called Watanabe a latter-day Mifune. Watanabe is not much closer to Mifune than Zwick is to Kurosawa.

Note on Sex. A film-directing student at New York University recently created a rumpus, according to a press report, by proposing a project in which two people would have sex in front of her class. The student, a young woman, would film the sex, then intercut it with shots of the same people in their daily lives. The point was to contrast sexual behavior with the way people behave otherwise. The project was disapproved by the school's administration, which requires that student films follow the ratings guidelines of the Motion Picture Association of America. Naturally this ruling brought protests, on campus and elsewhere, about academic and artistic freedom.

But what interested me most in the story was given only a passing sentence in the report. The directing student had found two actor friends who were willing to perform the sex in front of the class. Sexual liberty in universities is hardly news these days, but I could not help wondering about those two actors. Were they lovers already? Or had they just been introduced to each other and decided to go ahead? What went on in their minds?

The only clue I can find is that their sexual activity was going to be filmed. Would they have done it in front of, say, a sociology class without a camera? Much less likely, I'd say. The place of film in our iconography is so dominating, apparently, that the camera validates—exalts—almost anything. That young director may not have been able to make her picture, but en route she helped to underscore the power of film. ■

LEE SIEGEL ON TELEVISION

Angles in America

"MADE FOR TELEVISION." The designation made my heart sink when I was a boy: it amounted to a disclaimer of quality. The stops were definitely not going to be pulled out. Big frights would be cast as little scares; the violence would be not cathartic but exasperatingly phony; complex psychologies would be flattened into caricature. Not to mention the fact that a movie made for television had television stars, not movie stars. You were going to get the gifted but life-sized Darren McGavin and Marlo Thomas.

All this has changed, obviously. Thanks in large part to HBO, the little screen can barely contain the edgy artistic and production values of films made strictly for television. (It is no coincidence that the television screen is itself growing larger and larger every year.) As war, crime, and civil unrest wracked the country in the 1970s, the evening news expanded the frontiers of what was permitted on television, to the point where media–history came full circle and numerous movies, from *Natural Born Killers* to *15 Minutes*, now portray the six o'clock news as a laboratory for turning real violence into thrilling entertainment. Indeed, starting with Peter Finch in *Network* screaming that he was mad as hell and not going to take it anymore, Hollywood has become increasingly obsessed with television. More and more producers and directors realize that there is a good chance their films will be seen for the first time not in the theater, but as rented videos or DVDs on television's small screen.

So just about all the dimensions of dramatic entertainment are either made for television or suited to television, whether it is the script, the style of directing, or the method of acting. And filling the small screen to bursting with the big screen's super-sophisticated techniques can sometimes hide the smallness of what actually is appearing. Such is certainly the case with ANGELS IN AMERICA: Tony Kushner's play was not so much made for television as made to be rescued by television. The rescue consists in turning it into an "event." Sleekly directed by a celebrity, Mike Nichols, the contemporaneity artist who perfected the skill of making movies into "events," and peopled by celebrities—Al Pacino, Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson—HBO's *Angels* hits the screen with such glamour and noise that Nichols and company almost succeed in burying the play's essential mediocrity in this production's illusion of significance. In *The New Yorker*, Nancy Franklin actually called these six hours of chic "fearless," as if the film had defied the censors of a police state. Others, who never question why the likes of Paris Hilton have their own reality shows, have hailed the show as something on television finally "to argue about." But the only thing worth arguing about with regard to *Angels in America* is why anyone would think *Angels in America* is worth arguing about.

Angels in America is a second-rate play written by a second-rate playwright who happens to be gay, and because he has written a play about being gay, and about AIDS, no one—and I mean no one—is going to call *Angels in America* the overwrought, coarse, posturing, formulaic mess that it is. And the Bandwagon Plays On. Nichols knows this trick well: before directing the film of this play about AIDS, he directed the film of *Wit*, a play about a woman dying of cancer. When, in *Angels*, Roy Cohn says that America "is just no country for the infirm," he might have added that America is, however, a great place for novels and movies that find a profitable use for illness and the infirm.

Centering a work of art on the experience of marginality and suffering is like waterproofing your shoes. It repels criticism. You make the work seamless with its subject, so that anyone who criticizes the work seems callous about the subject. (Do you think that *The Pianist* was tedious and familiar, and that Adrien Brody simply walked through a critic-proof role? Then you hate the Jews and ride with the Cossacks.) And once you join in the praise of a protected work such as *Angels in America*, you reap the benefit of demonstrating your own virtue by celebrating the play. This confers on

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you the added halo of not appearing as a snob who presumes to know the difference between artistic success and artistic failure. After all, not everyone can judge the illusions of art, but everyone can project the illusion of goodness.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT KUSHNER possesses a gift for creating illusion in the theater. In fact in Portland, Maine I once saw his production of *The Illusion*, an obscure play by Corneille, and I remember the actors moving across the stage in thrall to a mesmerizing moon suspended above it, as if the play's own spirit were casting a spell over the play's own world. The angel that descends sensationally toward the stage in *Angels in America* had a similar effect. But all of Kushner's plays are adaptations, whether they adapt another play or not. They give no evidence of an original experience offered to an audience to do with it what it will; instead they consist of a preconceived set of ideas adapted for the stage in the form of characters who constantly speak about who they are and what they are doing, rather than allowing their identities and their actions to speak for themselves. Kushner's people develop point by point. In the case of *Angels in America*, Kushner made his ideas theatrical ideas. Its appeal on stage was that, at the height of the AIDS epidemic, when that disease was decimating the gay community and particularly the theater community, the play celebrated both the gay element in American theater and the theatrical element of being gay.

The angel appears to Prior, a gay man stricken with AIDS. She announces that he has been chosen to be a prophet of the new age, and invites him to ascend with her to heaven, where presumably he will occupy an honored position—he refuses, and clings to life. Now the device of the angel is wonderfully campy, akin to the wild farces of Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatre Co. But Kushner's angel, flying around the stage on visible wires, is also a descendant of the ancient *deus ex machina*, literally a god swung down from the heavens by means of a machine onto the stage at the last minute to radically change the outcome of events. And the angel's grandiose declarations, and Prior's earthy undercutting replies, and the frenetic, almost hysterical struggle between them, is pure opera buffa. The angel is also a woman—with eight vaginas, we are told: the vagina dialogues!—who, in some sense, is tempting Prior to reject his love of men and live a "normal" life, free from the curse of death; that is, the curse of being gay, that is, the curse of being mortal. And so in one deft, ingenious stroke Kushner makes the theater synonymous with being gay; and homosexuality synonymous with the free, antic, wise spirit of the theater; and the survival of gay men and the theater synonymous with the continuation of decency and humanity.

The San Francisco theatergoers who applauded the play's first full production in 1991 were also applauding their own still-beating hearts, and the American theater's resilience. To write a play about hope was, after all, why Kushner and San Francisco's Eureka Theater had gotten a grant in the first place. And the play was so affirmative, so much more broadly appealing than, say, Larry Kramer's polemics. It was acclaimed from San Francisco to London. For many people, it was not so much a piece for theater as proof that theater still existed. It really didn't matter that Kushner's play had almost no artistic merit. The play did not produce a catharsis through art. It *was* a catharsis, and thus could dispense with the complicated business of trying to make art.

ANGELS IN AMERICA'S DRAMATIC guts were as trite and tame as its theatricality was gratifyingly overblown. Its principal antagonist was Roy Cohn, whose self-deceit about his own homosexuality Kushner laboriously links to Reagan's economic policies, to Reagan's indifference to the AIDS epidemic, and to human untruth in general. The play's several subplots involve a closeted Mormon husband named Joe Pitt, who is lying to himself about his identity and thus pursuing the same destructive right-wing politics as Cohn; Harper, his anguished wife; Mother Pitt, Joe's devoutly Mormon mother; the black Belize, the hip, cool, wise, ironic, cynical, vitriolic, saintly former drag queen and now male nurse; and Louis, the Kushner persona, Prior's cerebral, head-in-the-clouds lover, who callously and spinelessly leaves Prior when Louis discovers that he is sick with AIDS, and whose callousness and spinelessness are presented as Kushner's sensitivity and courage about his own condition and life's universal complexity. The only element that all these garrulous subplots have in common is their histrionic intensity.

Cohn, the bad guy with AIDS, dies; Prior, the good guy with AIDS, lives—but since Cohn is the only actor with a hint of complexity, and wit, and candor, and since Prior echoes the litigious Cohn at play's end by saying about an indifferent-seeming God, "sue Him," you begin to suspect that Kushner has not fully resolved his attraction to Cohn. Mother Pitt, for all her upset when she discovers her son's homosexuality, ends up caring for Prior. Harper snaps out of her Valium addiction and heads for a happy new life sans Joe; Joe comes to terms with his gayness. Belize holds everyone together, just like the stock wisdom-figure of the drag queen in countless gay plays since at least the 1970s, but he is more Wilder than wild since he serves precisely the same function as the all-seeing narrator in *Our Town*. Louis, who alternates between feeling guilty that he didn't see his grandmother often enough before she died—Orestes, meet Chaim Potok—and feeling guilty that he abandoned Prior, gets roundly scolded and disapproved of before being taken back into everybody's affections. The play ends less like a drama by Kushner's hero Brecht than a musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, with everyone teamed up together in the end, in harmony and love. How comforting. If an anti-depressant went to sleep and dreamed that it was a play, it would dream that it was this play.

The worst part of all this, especially for a politically engaged Brechtian such as Kushner, is that *Angels*, with its incessant raging references to Reagan, was already dated when its first curtain rose. In 1991, Reagan had been out of office for three years, and the country was on the brink of a Democratic government whose immediate priority was integrating gays into the military, and whose vision of Kushner-like diversity co-existed very comfortably with Reaganite ideas about dismantling welfare and government entitlements. And insofar as *Angels* is an explicit brief for the multi-cultural movement that surged in the late '80s and '90s, it undermines its "message" because of the dead-end dynamic of its argument. In order to make the case for diversity, Kushner has to emphasize everyone's sexual, ethnic, and racial identity, which has the effect of making his vision of tolerance at the end look as much like fantasy as the airborne angel. But Kushner, who actually has his angel recite a version of Walter Benjamin's remark about the angel of history, to the

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effect that material progress is really spiritual regress, is as mushy-headed as Reagan ever was. His devotion to Brecht and Benjamin has about it a college freshman's starry-eyed susceptibility to the first difficult ideas that he encounters. And the characters wear the dialectical technique like a straitjacket: Louis will attack Reagan's heartlessness, and then Belize will expose Louis's own insensitivity while deriding Louis's ineffectual intellectualizing. Kushner thinks that by contradicting his pieties, he is moving beyond them, but he has really just found a way to hide his pieties behind the veneer of "complexity."

It boggles a tender mind that this quaint film of *Angels* should draw so much praise in late 2003. Here are Kushner's characters pleading for the acceptance of gay rights even as the Supreme Court declares a ban on sodomy unconstitutional and the Massachusetts Supreme Court declares gay marriage legal. This movie has exactly nothing to do with political reality. If there is one thing it does not do, it is clarify our moment. Even looking back, *Angels in America* really bears no more connection to its Reaganite subject than *Waiting for Lefty* did to the Depression. Like Odets's play, its appeal lies solely in its facile, upbeat vision of human survival in the midst of crisis, any crisis.

BUT SENTIMENTAL, HISTORICAL carpet-bagging is Kushner's trademark. On stage now at the Public Theater, you can see a superb group of actors wasting their gifts in *Caroline, or Change*, Kushner's "politically engaged" musical centered on the travails of a black maid working for a Jewish family in Louisiana in 1963. Again, we get the fearless dialectic: Jews and blacks, the victims of prejudice, are shown to have their own prejudices against each other. Imagine! Never mind that in 2003 the situation of blacks cannot be reduced to the situation of a black maid in a small Louisiana town, much less to a black maid whose central conflict is with a spoiled Jewish boy named Noah, another of Kushner's courageously complex self-portraits.

A truly engaging play would enact the confrontation between a Jewish playwright mindlessly exploiting the black experience and, say, an accomplished black writer who returns enraged from the former's play to contend with far less transparent modes of racism, and passive-aggressive projection, and condescension. There is not a single black character in *Caroline* who is not a mammy, a pickaninny, a shvartze, or an entertainer with lots of rhythm. And deyz all workin' fer a nice, socially conscious Jewish family. Black artists and intellectuals were once angered by Paul Robeson's return, in the midst of the Harlem Renaissance, to the spirituals sung by slaves, but about *Caroline, or Change*, not a peep. Instead we get John Lahr in *The New Yorker*—in the same issue with Nancy Franklin's "fearless"—declaring about Kushner's musical that "There are moments in the history of theater when stagecraft takes a new turn." The worlds of Noah, the nine-year-old Jewish boy, Lahr solemnly informs us, and Caroline, the middle-aged black maid, are "negotiable, Kushner makes clear, not bridgeable. *Caroline, or Change* gives the inconsolable a mature song...." A white British mandarin condescending to a cuddly Jewish playwright condescending to black people at a time when American consciousness of race has been pushed off the political agenda and onto media obsession with the likes of Kobe Bryant and Michael Jackson: now that's theater.

MIKE NICHOLS'S ULTRA-slick production is a study in television's fascinating alchemy. A crowded theater, in which one is immediately aware of other people, of other experiences, automatically provides the indispensable first step for the appreciation of a work of art, which is to get out of oneself. Television, since you watch it in your environment, usually alone, keeps you comfortably close to your own experience, which is the relaxing value of entertainment. That is why sitcoms are about everyday problems; and why even great television, like *The Sopranos*, or innovative television, like *Sex and the City* or *Six Feet Under*, keeps the viewer close to the personal, the local, the ordinary experience. And that is why television drama is nearly always tied to an issue fresh out of the news.

You know that Nichols is highly conscious of topicality because midway through his film of Kushner's play, he gives us a stunningly mendacious scene in which Joe and Harper are talking against a backdrop of the World Trade Center. Throughout the play, Kushner makes a connection between the impending millennium and the AIDS-beleaguered gay community; so naturally, after September 11, 2001, an apocalyptic day if ever there was one, many viewers are going to marvel, for all the horror and devastation of that plague-period, at Kushner's parochial perspective on history's capacity for surprise. To avert this, Nichols expertly juxtaposes a bit of end-of-days patter against the twin towers: speaking of the deteriorating ozone layer, Harper foresees a cataclysm in which "the end of the world is at hand." The unsuspecting viewer might get the impression that Kushner has, with astonishing clairvoyance, envisioned the world-ending destruction of the towers. But the film was made long after 9/11, and the towers were digitally inserted so as to make the play itself fulfill the play's own pose of prophecy.

Nichols's smooth, very nearly flawless camerawork has the shine of a campaign commercial. Like a campaign commercial, its purpose is to spin a negative into a positive—in this case to turn a failed play into effective television drama. With *Angels in America*, Nichols has managed to halt all the advances that HBO has made in films for television over the past decade or so and returned to the tired old made-for-television category. He has made a big film about a little play, in which Kushner's caricatures are worked away at by the camera until all you see are the faces of the big stars, which are meant to hide the rounded-out and flattened motivations of the characters they play. But, then, star-strickenness is Nichols's aesthetic. On stage, the angel of theatricality tried to save Kushner's play from its shallow grasp of life; on screen, the camera tries to perform the rescue-work of the angel by attempting to suppress the play altogether under the aura of glossy production. Angles in America.

Nichols turns the theatricality into special effects—poor Emma Thompson, swinging around on wires as the angel, looks like she is about to throw up. And just as those old made-for-television movies appealed to audiences by their treatment of edifying and familiar issues, Nichols rivets the camera on the most superficial references to emotion or psychology. Consider this typical exchange: "You are amazingly unhappy." "Oh big deal. You meet a valium addict, you figure out she's unhappy. That doesn't count." There is nothing psychologically original, or verbally interesting, or emotionally

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true, about those words. Kushner doesn't write dialogue; he makes the characters declaim Brechtish notations on what should be dialogue. The characters speak lines that are really what a director would say to an actor before a scene: "OK. You suspect that your husband's gay. You're angry and helpless and confused. You are amazingly unhappy." And then the actor would have to go and express unhappiness. Or a director might say: "You don't really have emotional problems. You're in a bad marriage that is playing havoc with your emotions." But here is Harper saying to Joe: "I do not have emotional problems, and if I do have emotional problems, it's from living with you." These bulletins are mind-numbing. It's like being on a date with a newspaper.

WHENEVER WE GET ONE of these segments of the Evening Emotional News, Nichols handles the camera with such seriousness and urgency that you feel insentient for thinking that nothing serious or urgent is going on. The camera is so close to the actors that it endows them with that living-room dimension that makes television drama seem profound when it is really just cozy. Nichols has seized on Kushner's directorial dialogue and used it to direct the audience's attention right past the dialogue to the heart-rending music, and to the tricky camera, and to the legendary stars. This buffed manipulativeness has to be why Nichols chose Pacino and Streep (Thompson doesn't perform her characters, she endures them), because the two of them are so miscast there cannot be any other reason.

Always more studied than intuitive, the usually miraculous Streep cannot think her way into such vaguenesses as Mother Pitt and the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg, both of whom she plays, so she intellectualizes the simplicity and humility of both, and thus ends up with a parody of simplicity and humility, a famous actor performing the facial expressions of the un-famous. (Did you know that the latter smile with eyes downward in near-embarrassment?) And Pacino is even more star-corrupted. On Broadway, Ron Leibman animated his Roy Cohn with clenched red-faced rage and self-conflict, but Pacino never loses control. There is an uncanny moment in *The Godfather, Part II* when Michael Corleone, seething with rage as his wife tells him that she aborted their child, suddenly springs at her and slaps her face; Pacino's genius was to have Michael explode while elegantly retaining his cigarette between the fingers of his other hand. The detached self-possession in the midst of near-murderous rage, as if his left side and his right side were two different people in two different worlds, was breathtaking. But now Pacino's villains, even when they are torn and tormented like Cohn, are all self-possession. They have the arrogance of a star.

Brando and De Niro re-invented themselves late in their careers as self-ironizing comic actors, but the extraordinary Pacino has become humorless, solipsistic, the last self-conscious upholder of the Method. He doesn't act; he does master classes for *Inside the Actors' Studio*. He is unforgettable not as Roy Cohn but as Pacino playing Roy Cohn. James Woods's performance as Roy Cohn in HBO's *Citizen Cohn* eleven years ago, though more modest and scaled down, was simply unforgettable. Indeed, five minutes of that movie, for all of its faithfulness to the real transcripts and history books and biographies, was worth all six hours of Nichols's *Angels*. "The messenger has arrived," proclaim the ads for *Angels*. And the messenger brings nothing but messages. ■

Christopher Benfey
Deserters

NOVELS, 1920–1925
By John Dos Passos
(Library of America, 879 pp., $35)

TRAVEL BOOKS AND OTHER WRITINGS, 1916–1941
By John Dos Passos
(Library of America, 865 pp., $40)

WHATEVER GERTRUDE Stein meant when she called Ernest Hemingway and his expatriate entourage a lost generation—lost to whom or to what?—it is now clear that some of the young Americans born around 1895 were more lost than others. Stein may have seen limited promise, at least when measured against her own unimpeachable genius or her friend Picasso's, in this band of ambitious refugees from the American Midwest and South. They had learned what they knew of art and life in the brothels and the museums of Paris, and in dragging corpses from the battlefields of Italy. Stein herself, with her Cubist décor and her mannered prose, schooled them in what one of their number, John Dos Passos, called "a certain esperanto of the arts that has 'modern' for its trademark." A century later, with their popularity and prestige undiminished, it is hard to feel sorry for such perennially found writers as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner, even as other writers of the Great War (such as Claude McKay, author of *Home to Harlem*) have been retrieved from oblivion. No lostness to complain of here when the British lost Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas, and Gaudier-Brzeska, and the French lost Charles Péguy and Alain-Fournier. Actually, the previous generation, Stein's own, has more pathos if less real war, with the burnout and early passing of Frank Norris, Jack London, and Stephen Crane.

Not every luminous name of the *entre deux guerres* has retained its gloss. Recent efforts to salvage the reputations of Edna Millay and Sinclair Lewis yielded mixed results. Now it is John Dos Passos's turn, and we have about three thousand pages of prose, courtesy of the Library of America, to help us make up our minds. The adjective "neglected" has dogged Dos Passos's reputation nearly from the beginning, almost as a peculiar form of recognition. From about 1925 to 1936, no American writer seemed more promising or more "serious" than Dos Passos, but by 1951 the critic Arthur Mizener could remark that Dos Passos had "very nearly achieved the rank of a neglected novel-

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ist." This eclipse was partly the result of World War II, which made such "committed" writing of the 1930s as Dos Passos's masterpiece, the trilogy of novels gathered under the immodest title *U.S.A.*, seem somehow beside the point. (Except in France, where Sartre called Dos Passos "the greatest writer of our time.") Dos Passos's sharp swing to the political right after the war, when he supported Joseph McCarthy and later Barry Goldwater, disgusted critics on the left without inspiring conservatives to read his pre-conversion works.

When the Library of America reprinted *U.S.A.* in 1996, it seemed a dutiful homage to a classic that nobody but graduate students read anymore. The unexpected commercial success of that volume has inspired two sequels: a clutch of early novels, including the durable *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), and a miscellany of travel writing, journalism, letters, poems, and diaries. It remains to be seen whether these well-intentioned, well-annotated, and rather reverential volumes will bring Dos Passos back to life or bury him once and for all.

WHATEVER THE QUALITY OF his work, Dos Passos's conflict-ridden life has an enduring fascination. He was born John Roderigo Madison in a Chicago hotel in 1896, the bastard son of a prominent New York corporate lawyer and his mistress, both of whom were married to others. His father, John Randolph Dos Passos, was the son of a Portuguese cobbler, but this exotic lineage did not prevent him from publishing in 1903 a political treatise entitled *The Anglo-Saxon Century and the Unification of the English-Speaking People*. After what he called a "hotel childhood" wandering with his mother through the fashionable capitals of Europe and learning French before English, John Madison had a formal education in line with his father's WASP ideals. At Choate, he was teased as a wimp with a foreign accent. At Harvard, from 1912 to 1916, he majored in English, found like-minded artsy friends such as E. E. Cummings, wrote poems for the *Advocate*, and was deeply impressed by the modernist Armory Show of 1913. His parents meanwhile had married, having shed their respective spouses, and John Madison became John Roderigo Dos Passos Jr.

Soon after his Harvard graduation, Dos Passos traveled to Madrid—the first of many sojourns in Spain—to study architecture and Spanish, and made a lasting friendship with José Robles, a student at the time and later a leader of the Spanish Republic as well as Dos Passos's Spanish translator. His mother died in 1915, his father in 1917, and Dos Passos returned to the United States, where he was promptly cheated by an aunt from a large share of his inheritance. Then he joined other Harvard men in the gentlemanly Norton-Harjes volunteer ambulance unit, serving in Italy and Alsace, meeting—inevitably—Hemingway, and returning to Madrid, already a kind of second home, at the end of 1919 to write in Goya's homeland of the disasters of war.

The Library of America volume of travel books and other writings includes letters and diaries from these years, and most of the material is embarrassing. Extended passages sound like outtakes from Kipling and Lafcadio Hearn, two of Dos Passos's favorite writers, interrupted by free verse that reads like a parody but, alas, is not:

> Today,
> As if a gritty stinking sponge
> Had smeared the slate of my pale
> memories,
> I stand aghast in a grey world,
> Waiting . . .

The ellipsis marks are Dos Passos's own. A few pages later we get, "The stream of sensation flows by—I suck it up like a sponge." In 1917 Dos Passos was himself a sponge for vague but violent political sentiments, mediated through maudlin bonhomie: "all young men are frightfully decent. If we only governed the world instead of the swag-bellied old fogies in frock-coats that do! oh what a God-damned mess they have made of organized society, the bankers and brokers and meat-packers—and business men. Better any tyranny than theirs. Down with the middle-aged!" He dreamed of drastic remedies: "My only refuge from the deepest depression is in dreams of vengeful guillotines."

Dos Passos collaborated with some Harvard buddies on a sprawling novel, a chunk of which was published in England in 1920 as *One Man's Initiation—1917*. The offensive bits that Dos Passos was obliged by his editors to cut might have spiced up a drab book; this "novel" is really a set of impressionistic sketches about an American aesthete named Martin Howe who joins the army and is exhilarated to be in France. But disillusion with the bureaucratic military soon follows, and in a set scene that feels like a radio play Howe listens to a group of Frenchmen—including a Catholic and a socialist—debate solutions to the mire of the modern world before all are killed. *Three Soldiers* (1921), which Dos Passos worked on in Madrid, is a much better war novel with similar themes: the mechanistic bureaucracy of the military against the free spirits of the young men caught in its gears. Already aiming for the panoramic reach of his later fiction, Dos Passos chooses three representative men from different regions of the United States—the West, the Midwest, and the East—but the clear hero is John Andrews, an aspiring Harvard-educated composer who deserts the army in rural France to work on a symphonic poem entitled the "Soul and Body of John Brown." Andrews is clearly a stand-in for Dos Passos; he finds musical inspiration in reading "the gorgeously modulated sentences" of Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*. When he is betrayed by his French girlfriend and the military police come to pick him up, he leaves the sheets on his writing table: "First one sheet, then another, blew off the table, until the floor was littered with them."

THE HUNTINGTON PRIZE

The Huntington Prize Committee is pleased to announce the first recipient of the Huntington Prize for the best book published each year in the field of national security studies. Eliot A. Cohen has been awarded the prize for his book *Supreme Command*. This book is an excellent example of the policy-relevant scholarship long encouraged by Samuel P. Huntington.

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Three Soldiers is too slackly constructed, and too predictable in its narrative unfolding, to stand comparison with Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* or with Cummings's war novel *The Enormous Room*. We know right away that the obstreperous Hoosier Chrisfield will get his revenge on the bullying sergeant, that Andrews will desert the military machine for the cultural playground of Paris. A better comparison might be with Willa Cather's sporadically engaging but now forgotten *One of Ours* (1922), which also has a sensitive musician as sacrificial lamb. Like Dos Passos's aesthete-heroes, Cather's Claude Wheeler (who has left his frigid wife in Nebraska) is more comfortable in sensual France than back home. That Cather's central figures, Claude and his close friend David, are meant to be gay is pretty clear by the end of the book; when both are killed, Cather suggests that they would have committed suicide in modern macho America had they survived the war. Martin Howe considers putting a bullet through his head at the end of *One Man's Initiation,* and suicide as an escape from the regimentation of both military and civilian life is a recurrent theme in *Three Soldiers.*

CATHER AND DOS PASSOS SEEM to agree that the United States of the 1920s is no place for sensitive men. Jimmy Herf, in *Manhattan Transfer*, is another of these, but he is a much richer character than anyone in the war novels. The novel itself is extraordinary in its ambitious sweep, an attempt to portray all of New York City in its kaleidoscopic interconnectedness. A hundred characters or so are accorded short, fragmentary chapters that hurtle forward, linked by proximity in time or place or theme. A fire engine (a recurring motif) heard through the window in one chapter puts out a fire in which a character dies in the next and a man declares his fiery passion for a woman in the one that follows.

Ulysses
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Dos Passos is particularly eager to capture the visual shock of New York City, which he called "the city of scrambled alphabets" and "the city of gilt letter signs." From the time of the Armory Show, Dos Passos had been interested in modern art. For a time he thought of being a painter, and he exhibited and published his own drawings and paintings, some of which are included in these volumes. In 1923, while working on *Manhattan Transfer*, he had shown his Fauve-ish paintings in New York and admired the newspaper headlines that his friend, the artist Gerald Murphy, designed as a backdrop for Cole Porter's ballet *Within the Quota.* In *Manhattan Transfer,* Dos Passos's characters are always reading newspapers, or coming across newspapers abandoned in the streets, or glimpsing headlines on the run ("ADMITS KILLING CRIPPLED MOTHER"), or—in the case of Jimmy Herf—writing for them. The modernist thrill of juxtaposing bits of newsprint in different fonts, exploited by Picasso and Murphy, became for Dos Passos a central technique in the "newsreel" sections of *U.S.A.*

Dos Passos tried other ways to give visual immediacy to *Manhattan Transfer*—for example, by filtering all his visual descriptions through the operations of light. Sometimes he achieves effects that recall, perhaps intentionally, the so-called Ashcan School of American realist painters: "Outside the lemoncolored dawn was drenching the empty streets, dripping from cornices, from the rails of fire escapes, from the rims of ashcans, shattering the blocks of shadow between buildings." Sometimes he aims for a spangled, hothouse manner reminiscent of Bonnard's bathroom beauties: "The bathroom door opened; a stream of sunlight reflected out of a pierglass cut the murky hall in half, out of it came a head of hair like copper wire, bluedark eyes in a brittlewhite eggshaped face. Then the hair was brown down the hall above a slim back in a tangerine-colored slip, nonchalant pink heels standing up out of the bathslippers at every step."

Despite the rich array of figures—businessmen and theater producers and actors and drunkards and prostitutes—the reader's attention is brought back to the newspaper reporter Jimmy Herf, who arrives in New York as a baby with his mother on July 4, and Ellen Oglethorpe, the aspiring actress with copper-colored hair and nymphomaniac tendencies (Millay seems a model) wearing the tangerine slip. They are briefly married, but the marriage is only happy while they travel in France. The novel ends as Dos Passos's novels always end, with desertion. Herf walks out of his newspaper job at the Pulitzer building and leaves New York on foot. He hitches a ride on a furniture truck. "How fur ye goin?" the driver asks. "I dunno," says Herf. "Pretty far."

WE MAY WONDER WHAT made American urban life, with its undeniable modernist charms, so unbearable for John Dos Passos. He seems to have recoiled from the sheer toughness of the city, its clubby atmosphere of male competitiveness. Jimmy Herf, bullied as a child for being a "girlboy" and a crybaby, is clearly another stand-in for Dos Passos himself. A gay actor who is trying to get straightened out by psychoanalysis tells Herf that he always thought Herf was gay. Dos Passos's friends seem to have had the same suspicions about Dos Passos. Edmund Wilson in *The Twenties* tells of a conversation between Dos Passos and Cummings during a trip to Spain they took together.

> When we got to a town, Cummings said, I'd want to go out to the square or somewhere to see if I could find something [he meant a girl]. Dos would never go with me—he'd say, "I'll just stay here in the hotel, I think." One day I said to him. "Dos: don't you ever think about women?" No. "Don't you ever dream about sex?" No. What I went through with that man! He'd wake me up in the night groaning and throwing himself around in his sleep. I'd say, "What's the matter, Dos?" He'd say, "Why, I thought there were some beautiful wild swans flying overhead."

Dos Passos's on-again, off-again engagement with Crystal Ross, beginning in 1922, and cut off in 1926 when she married another man, must have reinforced his friends' suspicions. Still, Dos Passos was happily married to Katharine Smith, a childhood friend of Hemingway's, for almost twenty years, from 1929 until her death in a car accident in 1947; he re-married two years later.

Dos Passos spent much of his life in a feverish search—a hotel adulthood to match his hotel childhood—for a good place in the sun where art and life could

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flourish. He discovered Spain earlier than Hemingway, and his Spain is a more nuanced cultural terrain than Hemingway's romp of trout streams and bullfights. The reasons for the affinity may be partly ancestral: Dos Passos's grandfather had come from Portugal, and in his engaging travel book *Rosinante to the Road Again*, written in 1922, he archly portrays himself as Telemachus in search of his father. What Dos Passos found in Spain was partly what Northern travelers have always found there: "Nights of dancing and guitar-playing at vintagetime, *fiestas* of the Virgin, where older, realer gods were worshipped than Jehovah and the dolorous Mother of the pale Christ, the *toros*, blood and embroidered silks aflame in the sunlight, words whispered through barred windows at night, long days of travel on stony roads in the mountains."

Spain, in Dos Passos's view, was an agrarian and communal world to oppose to the competitive industrialism of the United States. When Spanish peasants greeted him with a glass of wine or a slice of watermelon, Dos Passos suggested that in America "these same people would come out after us with shotguns loaded with rock salt." Despite his leftist convictions, Dos Passos's nostalgia for an agrarian society close to the land—"the walking, consciously or not, of the way beaten by generations of men who had tilled and loved and lain in the cherishing sun"—is not that far from the inchoate longings of such Southern conservative contemporaries as Faulkner and Allen Tate.

THE FRESHEST, LEAST FORCED writing in these Library of America volumes appears in a few pages from the Rosinante sketches and in the exceptional *Orient Express* (1927), a "travel book" only in the sense in which Graham Greene and Ryszard Kapuściński and V. S. Naipaul write travel books. The book has an elegiac feel, nostalgic for both an earlier world of heroic travel and an earlier world of civilized human behavior. In a vivid chapter on the French writer Blaise Cendrars, entitled "Homer of the Trans-Siberian," Dos Passos recalls a childhood visit to the Paris world's exposition of 1900, where the Trans-Siberian train was on display, "virtual travel" almost a century before the Internet: "That stationary Trans-Siberian where the panorama unrolled Asia every hour was the last vestige of the Homeric age of railroading." Dos Passos plunges the reader into the contrastingly unheroic modern world of 1921–22, when "there's an American bar in Baghdad and the Grand Lama of Thibet listens in on Paul Whiteman ragging the Blue Danube and the caterpillar Citroëns chug up and down the dusty streets of Timbuctoo."

The heart of the book is a journey through the brutalized Middle East following the Great War. The pages on rat-infested Baghdad have a gloomy contemporary poignancy, and Dos Passos's camel trek across the desert to Damascus (arranged with the help of British officials such as Gertrude Bell, who were carving up Arabia with maps and rulers) is continually arresting. Lying in his crimson tent the first night out gave him "the feeling of being a worm in a fuchsia flower.... At last here was an end of colonies and whisky and soda and the *Strand* and canned goods and the American Bar on Tigris bank and the soldier-littered rail-scarred dumping grounds of the West."

IT IS EASY TO MAKE TOO MUCH OF Dos Passos's politics, by according his novels more sophistication about the class struggle than they in fact display. He is more interested in cultural producers like actors and artists and newspapermen than in factory workers or captains of industry. Though he once bragged that "everyday I become more red," Dos Passos, as Daniel Aaron remarks in *Writers on the Left*, was "an observer rather than a joiner." He did not fight in the Spanish Civil War, never joined the Communist Party, never helped organize a strike. Like Edna Millay, he was never further to the left than during the Sacco and Vanzetti case of 1927, and like her he wrote bad poetry inspired by it: "They are dead now/The black automatons have won/They are burned up utterly/their flesh has passed into the air of Massachusetts." Such ponderous lines owe more to Eliot than to Marx.

It is also easy to make too little of Dos Passos's politics, by explaining his hatred of organized society as an Oedipal conflict with his wealthy corporate father, resolved when Dos Passos recovered in court, soon after World War II, some of the money due him from his inheritance. Edmund Wilson thought Dos Passos was perfectly consistent in his shift from left to right since his real enemy was liberalism. This, too, is overly simple. What Dos Passos treasured was what he called in *Rosinante* "the strong anarchistic reliance on the individual man." One of his revolutionary ideas, conveyed to Theodore Dreiser in 1937, was to instill something of the spirit of the New England town meeting into American politics. His deepest political moorings were in the turn-of-the-century populism of Eugene Debs and Thorstein Veblen, who are accorded two of the most eloquent and deeply felt biographical tributes in *U.S.A.* His dream of a good society, as outlined in the Veblen sketch, sounds like a stump speech by Al Gore: "a new matteroffact commonsense society dominated by the needs of the men and women who did the work and the incredibly vast possibilities of peace and plenty offered by the progress of technology."

During the Spanish Civil War, a particularly excruciating period for him, Dos Passos supported the Republic and sympathized with Communist factions until he learned that his old friend José Robles, an official in the Republican government, had been secretly shot by Communists on a bogus charge of spying. One of the most moving pieces of writing in these volumes is a letter to *The New Republic*, dated July 19, 1939, in which Dos Passos lays out the facts of the shameful execution as he knows them. Hemingway, playing hard man to Dos Passos's scruples, had looked into the execution and concluded that since Robles was shot as a spy, he must have been a spy. Dos Passos's measured response kept his fury in bounds: "Anyone who knew Spaniards of any stripe before the civil war will remember that they tended to carry personal independence in talk and manners to the extreme. It is only too likely that Robles, like many others who were conscious of their own sincerity of purpose, laid himself open to a frame-up ... pushed to the point of execution because Russian secret agents felt that Robles knew too much about the relations between the Spanish war ministry and the Kremlin." Conversations with George Orwell and others

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solidified Dos Passos's sense that "personal independence" and Soviet-style Communism were antithetical; he wrote to a friend in 1937 that "Anglo-Saxon democracy is the best political method of which we have any ... I have come to believe that the CP is fundamentally opposed to our democracy."

I AM NOT ALONE IN WISHING THAT this personal voice of Dos Passos, lyrical and skeptical at once, were more audible in his best fiction. There is a depersonalized deterministic grimness in *Manhattan Transfer* and *U.S.A.* that is only alleviated by the momentary flashes of Jimmy Herf's insight and by the "camera eye" sections of *U.S.A.*, when Dos Passos allows himself brief stretches of autobiographical musings. Otherwise, it is the relentless momentum of modern society that Dos Passos is after, and the equally relentless suppression of his own authorial voice. This suppression provoked equal and opposite responses from two formidable mid-century critics. For Sartre, who once chastised François Mauriac for using an omniscient narrator ("only God is omniscient, and God is not a novelist"), Dos Passos seemed the novelist of the future, who had successfully purged every authorial presence from his work, including the shaping power of narrative. "There is no narrative," wrote Sartre approvingly, "but rather the jerky unreeling of a rough and uneven memory, which sums up a period of several years in a few words only to dwell languidly over a minute fact.... For Dos Passos, narrating means adding. This accounts for the slack air of his style."

Meanwhile F. R. Leavis criticized Dos Passos for exactly the same reason, the absence of a palpable personal voice, even while recognizing the fundamental seriousness of Dos Passos's intentions: "The shortcomings of the work both as art and propaganda are related to a certain insufficiency in it when it is considered as an expression of personality (which on any theory a work of art must in some sense be)." I can see Sartre's point, but as a reader I must side with Leavis. If Dos Passos's development as a writer, at least up to *U.S.A.*, was among other things a steady suppression of his own lyrical and authorial voice, we may as readers find some paradoxical pleasure in reading backward in his work, and listening for those moments—especially in his travel writing and in the non-fiction sections of *U.S.A.*—when his own voice most comes through.

"I never dared be radical when young," wrote Robert Frost, "For fear it would make me conservative when old." Was Dos Passos an American Orwell, converted from youthful fantasies by the hard facts of twentieth-century total war? It is tempting to think so. Both men in their youth were made to feel uneasy in elite schools, and tried to feel at home among the down and out. Both labored hard as novelists but found their most compelling voices as essayists and satirists. For both, the Spanish Civil War was a turning point, or rather a point of no return. Both are most moving as poets of cold-eyed disillusionment.

Had Dos Passos, who lived until 1970, died in 1939, with his most movingly disillusioned works—the pages on the Spanish Civil War and the biographical sections of *U.S.A.*—complete, would he now be revered by left and right, like Orwell, as a clear-eyed man in a time of propagandists? The two men met only once, in a hotel in Barcelona in 1937, where Orwell was recovering from a gunshot wound through his neck. Understandably they did not talk long, but Dos Passos, as Townsend Ludington notes in his biography of Dos Passos, "remembered his sense of relief to be conversing with an honest man at last." "There's a certain majesty in innocence in the face of death," Dos Passos wrote in *Journeys Between Wars*. "This man Orwell referred without overemphasis to things we both knew to be true.... Perhaps he was still a little afraid of how much he knew." ■

Hillel Halkin
Money and Soul

THE PATRON
A LIFE OF SALMAN SCHOCKEN, 1877–1959
By Anthony David
(Metropolitan Books, 451 pp., $30)

FOR A YEAR IN THE EARLY 1960s, not long after finishing college, I had a job working for Schocken Books, a small publishing house in New York. Actually, "small" is something of an overstatement. Schocken consisted at the time of four people working in a two-room apartment on 38th Street and Park Avenue: the editor-in-chief Herzl Rome, two secretaries, and the editorial staff, which was me. Rome was a shy man who spent much of his time behind a desk in the apartment's former bedroom busy with his favorite occupation of drawing. He was married to Eve Schocken, whose father, the erstwhile German-Jewish department-store magnate Salman Schocken, had founded the Schocken Verlag in Berlin in 1930.

My job was not onerous. Besides copy-editing, writing blurbs, reading and rejecting unsolicited manuscripts (one or two, with content to match, addressed to "Shocking Books"), and running occasional errands, I frequented the nearby 42nd Street Library to look for out-of-print titles that could be salvaged from the public domain and re-issued in paperback. (Among the volumes I remember doing that year were Acton's *Renaissance to Revolution* and Schurer's *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*.) This, along with the English rights to the works of Franz Kafka, was the mainstay of the house, which had run out of the initiative and the budget to publish much in the way of new books.

Salman Schocken, who had died a few years earlier, had not planned it that way. When he established Schocken Books in 1946 after having first moved his publishing business to Palestine, to which he fled from Nazi Germany in 1938, he had typically grandiose ambitions for it. He aspired, as he wrote in a letter cited by Anthony David, to make it "the greatest force within [American] Jewish life" by producing "a series of books that will give the young American Jew the opportunity to become acquainted with the treasures of thousands of years of our Jewish culture." He

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was convinced that "if we succeed, it will most likely be the greatest accomplishment among the many things that have been connected with the name Schocken over the past forty years."

THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS WERE indeed impressive, starting with the department stores themselves. They were state-of-the-art establishments, the first of which opened in the Saxon town of Oelsnitz, in eastern Germany, in 1904. Department stores were not a novelty when the young Schocken, the son of a traditionally religious Jewish shop owner from the district of Posen near the German-Polish border, scraped up the capital to start one; they had existed in European cities since the mid-nineteenth century, and were pioneered in America by German Jews such as Bernard Gimbel and Lazarus Straus, the owner of Macy's. What distinguished Schocken's stores was his adoption of the American model of aggressive marketing, industrial-style efficiency, in-house design, and the democratizing copying and mass-producing of new ideas, and of fashionable and luxury items, to make them available to ordinary buyers at reasonable prices.

The Oelsnitz store's success led to more and more branches, and two of them, in Nuremberg and Stuttgart, were housed in buildings designed by Erich Mendelsohn, one of Germany's leading modernist architects. By the time of the Nazi takeover, the Schocken chain, David writes, was

> one of Europe's largest. In big cities and small towns alike, the stores sold Bauhaus-inspired furniture and cologne to the New Man; the New Woman could now bare her thighs in public after the company introduced form-fitting, short cotton dresses. The phonograph department carried the American hit "Yes, We Have No Bananas." The book department shied away from "pulp fiction".... These lightly amorous and melodramatic novelettes sold in millions at the time—but Salman was undeterred. His stores offered readers not only serious fiction but also ... progressive texts on the female body [and] female sexuality, as well as works on repressed feelings and compensated drives.... Advertisements, informative brochures, and the clever use of sales displays educated mothers to catch up to the modern world.

Serious books—reading them, collecting them, and supporting their authors—were Salman Schocken's real passion. He was one of those businessmen who, had he been his own son, would have chosen a more intellectual vocation. A voracious reader as a boy to whom not commerce but "scholarship [seemed] an ideal mode of life," he was denied a higher education because his father could not pay the tuition. He liked to tell a story, whether or not embellished by memory, that could have been an outline of his life. Frustrated by his inability to continue his studies, David relates, "he vented his fury to a sympathetic rabbi he happened to meet on a train. 'I have already begun to read the writings of [German-Jewish philosopher] Moses Mendelssohn,' he explained. 'You should first become a merchant,' the rabbi replied. 'And once you are on your feet economically you can better devote yourself to more spiritual interests than you could as a hungry academic.'"

This tale was double-edged, for if the merchant without "spiritual interests" was someone whom the department store owner looked down on, he felt a more subtle and ambivalent condescension toward the "hungry academic," the impractical intellectual who could not survive without the merchant's help. He himself took pride in being equally a man of the world and a man of the mind, although it was only on a trip to Italy in 1907 that he glimpsed a way of productively combining the two things. There, while reading Burckhardt's *History of The Italian Renaissance*, he was struck by its account of "the merchant princes who put their stamp on the era by pouring money into culture.... It was an eye-opening discovery for the thirty-year-old [Schocken] to see how culture could go hand in hand with buying, selling, dealing, and trading. Thoughts of backing a Jewish renaissance germinated."

"JEWISH RENAISSANCE," I IMAGINE, was a phrase that Schocken picked up from reading Martin Buber, who had used it in several essays published in the first decade of the twentieth century. Like Schocken, Buber had grown up in a traditional Jewish environment and moved beyond it, and now, under the influence of Zionism, he was working his way back to his Jewish roots. He was a harbinger of what was to become a small movement of educated German Jews, many from partially or wholly assimilated homes, who sought to re-connect with Judaism on a more sophisticated level than that of the German-Jewish discourse of the day.

Up to the beginning of the century, masses of Jews, lured by the opening up to them of German society, had left the Jewish fold and not returned to it; as a sociological generalization it was safe to say, as Gershom Scholem did in his memoir *From Berlin to Jerusalem*, that "any young Jew who was not part of the strictly Orthodox minority" in those years "faced the progressive deterioration of his Jewish identity." Now a counter-trend, modest in size but qualitatively remarkable, set in. Besides Buber and Scholem, one can point to such figures as Kafka, Franz Rosenzweig, Walter Benjamin, Gustav Landauer, Erich Gutkind, Robert Eisler, Jiri Langer, Ernst Simon, Kurt Blumenfeld, Max Brod, and Elsa Lasker-Schueler, to name but a few. Children of the 1870s and '80s, they were in revolt against the generation of their parents, whose bourgeois existence had deprived them, they felt, of all that was vital in life, including the wellsprings of their Jewishness. A "Jewish renaissance" was vaguely in the air because it was concretely hungered for.

Schocken met Buber in 1911. That same year also saw the beginning of his involvement with the German Zionist movement, whose congress he addressed. He did not have to pound on doors for a hearing; men seeking to spend their money never do, even if he considered himself not a philanthropist but a cultural entrepreneur prepared to invest in the Jewish future. It took a while to weigh his options, but in 1915, during World War I, he made his first investment: the financing of Buber's *Der Jude*, a periodical that was to be, until its demise in 1924, the most interesting Jewish review in the world. By the war's end he was also sponsoring the research of Scholem, then launching a career as a scholar of Jewish mysticism, and the fiction of Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes, a young Galician-born Hebrew writer living in Germany.

He had also established an advisory committee named "The Cultural Board of Management," headed by Buber, to recommend more ambitious projects.

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Schocken conceived of this board as the engine of his "Jewish renaissance," a body of experts that would plan and commission large numbers of great Jewish works by the simple expedient of finding the right authors to write on the right subjects, just as a good retailer might find the right designer for a line of women's lingerie. He did not get very far. Although the postwar years in Weimar Germany did witness a flowering of Jewish talent, this had little to do with Schocken's efforts. The right authors for the dozens of books he wanted written either did not exist, or were at work on something else, or were interested in writing different books, or never delivered the ones that they promised. Except for the monumental Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible into German, the board of management, much to his frustration, failed to come up with suggestions that he liked (he vetoed several that he didn't, such as Buber's idea of commissioning Arnold Zweig to write a Jewish "spiritual novel"), and it was eventually disbanded.

Schocken seemed to think that literatures and peoples could be managed like department-store chains. Stymied on the cultural front, he turned to the Zionist one, proposing at the Zionist Congress in Vienna in 1925 to convert the Jewish community of Palestine into a giant corporation that would be profitably run from his German headquarters. Although Anthony David defends the "Schocken Plan" as "not entirely far-fetched," since "the total size of the Jewish economy [of Palestine] was considerably smaller than a major industrial conglomerate," this is one of several cases in which one suspects he has overidentified as a biographer with his subject's megalomaniacal tendencies.

Nor did Schocken's "authoritarian style," as David calls it, leave much of a mark during several years as chairman of the executive council of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a stint that ended when he immigrated to America in 1941. Opinionated and sure of himself like many a self-made man, he was happiest when he was undisputedly in charge, as he was of Schocken Verlag, a truly first-rate publishing house; of the Tel Aviv newspaper *Ha'aretz*, bought in 1936 and turned into the intellectually serious and independently liberal daily that it still is today; and of the Schocken Library, whose superb collection of Judaica and rare books, while remaining housed in his Jerusalem residence, was donated to the Jewish Theological Seminary after his death.

AND THAT, AFTER HIS DEATH, is what, if at all, Salman Schocken would have been remembered as—a noted businessman, publisher, bibliophile, and German Zionist leader with some inflated notions of himself—were it not for his lifelong association with Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes, who went on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature under the pen-name of S. Y. Agnon. Agnon had immigrated to Palestine from a Galician shtetl in 1908 and traveled to Germany in 1912 to broaden his horizons, and was stranded there by Word War I. Struggling to survive as a part-time Hebrew tutor and editor, he passed the first half of the war years in Berlin in difficult circumstances, moving from flat to flat and hoping to avoid the draft, for which he was eligible as an Austrian citizen. In the end he received his call-up, flunked his physical by swallowing volumes of black coffee that made him ill, and landed in the hospital with a kidney ailment.

By then, however, he had met Salman Schocken and been taken under his wing. Indeed, he was already under Schocken's wing before meeting him and without knowing it, since Schocken, having heard of the gifted young writer from Palestine, had arranged behind Agnon's back for his pay to continue being remitted when the Hebrew publisher he was working for shut down. (It is a pity that David omits this detail, which says something about Schocken's occasional capacity for delicacy.) The two men were finally introduced in 1916, and soon afterward Schocken offered Agnon a commission for an anthology of Jewish literature that came with a monthly stipend for five years—an anthology that Agnon never prepared and perhaps was never meant to prepare as long as he concentrated on his own writing. It was the end of his financial worries. From then on Schocken saw to his livelihood, first as his patron and later as his Hebrew publisher.

Their relationship, though cordial, was always formal. In the correspondence between them, partly in Hebrew and partly in German, Schocken wrote to "Dear Agnon" or "Dear Mr. Agnon," and Agnon wrote back to "My Dear and Most Esteemed Mr. Schocken," "Dear Sir and Dear Friend," and other combinations. Eventually these letters, those of two men prominent in their fields, came to be largely about publishing matters. But before Agnon became well known they were more the exchange of a stepfatherly benefactor with his adopted beneficiary. Agnon described his work and his needs, flattering his patron with compliments and the Jewish stories that he chose to share with him; Schocken sent back money, books, and advice. In a letter from Munich, to which he had gone in 1919 to work on a Schocken-commissioned Hebrew children's book illustrated by a niece of Freud's, Agnon asked for a department-store shipment of "6 size 39 shirt collars, 6 pairs of socks, and 3 pairs of underwear," adding, "Please send it all by express mail— and don't deduct it from my pay." Several weeks later Schocken replied that he hoped the clothing had arrived; he counseled Agnon to quit the city, a turbulent place following the crushing of Bavaria's short-lived Communist regime, and concluded, with a quiet generosity that any young writer today would give his right arm to have from his publisher, "If you need to have your monthly payments increased, please let me know."

SCHOCKEN HAD GROWN UP GEOgraphically close to Eastern Europe and was attracted, as were other German Jewish intellectuals of his day, to what he considered the greater richness and authenticity of Eastern European Jewish life—and those were the qualities that he admired, and was charmed by, in Agnon. And yet much to his credit, he also had the literary acumen to realize, on the basis of Agnon's early stories alone, that he was dealing with a writer of genius who needed neither prodding nor criticism, nor even encouragement, but simply the leisure to write without having to fret about money. It is impossible to face a bookshelf of Agnon's large output without reflecting on how much of it might be missing were it not for Schocken's support.

This support was irreplaceable. Foundation grants did not exist in Agnon's day, certainly not in Hebrew literature; the Hebrew-reading public was too small to enable an author to live from the sale of his work; and there was only one other serious patron of Hebrew writing, the Russian-Jewish publisher Avraham Yosef Shtiebl, who put out some of Agnon's early work but lost most of his money after World War I. Agnon would have

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become what he became without Schocken's support, of course; but the awful torment of having to drudge at some classroom or office job when all he wanted was to write his fiction was spared him. There is a saying in the Talmud that some men win and some men lose an entire world in a moment. Salman Schocken won his in the moment he rescued Agnon.

ANTHONY DAVID HAS WRITTEN an engaging and well-paced biography. Its main fault is his often uncritical acceptance of Schocken's own appraisal of himself and his surroundings. Sometimes a biographer can feel too close to his subject. This is especially true when David writes about Schocken's relationship to Hebrew literature and Jewish culture. Schocken was an autodidact, and he had the autodidact's enthusiasm for his own discoveries; what he did not know did not exist for him, and what was revealed to him he thought unknown before him. At a time when the entire cultural enterprise of Zionism was engaged in constructing a "usable past" for a secular Jewish nationalism, there was a preposterous naïveté in Schocken's belief that *he* would be the man to make this past available—that "he [would] set out," as David writes with a straight face, "to show how Jews had lived through all the great epochs of human history; [how] they too had left records, even if no one had bothered to excavate them." A whole industry of such excavation was already underway at the time Schocken began to dream of it, and if David's lack of Hebrew (or so I take it to be from the absence of references to Hebrew sources in his notes) helps to explain his ignorance of the achievements of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jewish scholarship, it still does not quite excuse it.

David could also use more perspective on Schocken's attitude toward Zionist and Israeli politics, whose dominant figures in his day were Eastern European Jews. Although Schocken did not share the prejudice against *Ostjuden* that was widespread among German Jews, his brand of Zionism, with its cultural and spiritual idealism that had little patience for the details of nation- and state-building, was of a distinctly German variety. The Zionists to whom he was closest during his years in Palestine, a country that he never felt much at home in, were German Jews with similar views, men such as Buber, Scholem, the philosopher Hugo Bergmann, and the journalist Robert Weltsch. Many of these men, traumatized by their experience of Nazism, were active in the Jewish pacifist organization B'rit Shalom—and Schocken, while never joining it, participated in their condemnation of Zionist leaders like Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky as nationalist vulgarians interested only in Jewish power. David, writing with contemporary events in mind, approvingly seems to consider this group a forerunner of today's Israeli "peace camp." Perhaps it was; but David might also have asked whether, in the age of the Holocaust and the unrelenting Arab determination to first prevent and then wipe out a Jewish state, the contempt for power was not a greater sin than the pursuit of it.

SCHOCKEN CONTINUED TO SURround himself with German Jews during his years in New York. To edit Schocken Books he hired the scholar Nahum Glatzer, later a professor at Brandeis, and Hannah Arendt. Arendt did not last long in the job. She quarreled with Schocken over publishing authors such as T.S. Eliot and Walter Benjamin, affordable properties for a small house in those years but too abstruse for Schocken to appreciate; she called him "dictatorial" and "unbearably inept," and quit in 1948.

Schocken himself lost interest in his publishing house at about the same time, as he had years before in his Board of Cultural Management. He turned it over to his son Theodor, who appointed his brother-in-law Herzl Rome to run it. It was a sleepy place the year I worked there. Kafka was not yet a household name in America and the office phone didn't ring often. I wrote my blurbs and rejection slips in the mornings, had a sandwich and a beer at my desk, and went off to the 42nd Street Library.

One day we had a visit from a tall, mournfully middle-aged man. His name was Robert Klopstock, and he said he was in New York for the day and had stopped by to say hello. I knew who he was: I had recently read Max Brod's biography of Kafka—I had a complete set of Kafka in my apartment, purloined from the office—and Klopstock was described there with warmth as a young medical student who, with Kafka's last love Dora Diamant, ministered to him as he lay dying, a poor man living on a tiny pension, in a sanatorium near Vienna in 1924. Greatly excited, I asked to hear more. "Franz died in my arms," Klopstock confirmed with a helpless gesture, as if it were a death that he should have prevented. But even now, nearly forty years later, he seemed too broken up by it to go on. One of the secretaries made him tea, and he drank it and went his way.

To the best of my knowledge Salman Schocken never met Kafka, the rights to whose work he bought for a modest sum from Kafka's mother long after her son's death. Kafka himself earned nothing to speak of from the little he published in his lifetime, and worked in an accident insurance office in Prague, napping in the afternoon when he came home and staying up nights to write. It was a killing routine. "Dearest," he wrote in a midnight letter to his fiancée Felice Bauer in December 1912 after reluctantly putting away a story he was working on, "I really should have gone on writing all night. Nevertheless, I am stopping, I dare not risk it." He had to go to bed because he had been falling asleep at work and had become "a nightmare" to his boss. "Sometimes," he wrote, "I think I can almost hear myself being ground down, by my writing on the one hand, by the office on the other." And there at the time was Schocken, who already knew Buber who knew Kafka, eager to be a patron! Imagine if.... But even in the Talmud you only get to win one world. We should be grateful enough for that one. ■

The Poet

O my little Napoleon, adrift on St. Helena.
Food is bad (and tastes of metal),
and the terrible sun, high above
your extravagant hat, will not set. Close, again,
one fearsome eye, and train the other
on your spyglass: in the haze,
an island. And farther:
an island. A school of fish
jumps as one. And dolphins
you once read of, book like a map
across your bed, could bring a man to shore.

STEVE KRONEN

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SHENANDOAH DIARIST

Landsman

DELHI, SHANGHAI, THE RUSsian Far East—the search for Jewish life in exotic places grows so tiresome. At least, this was my opinion as a child whose mother, upon touching down in an unfamiliar locale, would master its Jewish history by the time we reached the hotel. "Take off your fins, and let's go find the Portuguese synagogue," went the refrain of a Caribbean vacation. "You can snorkel at Jones Beach when we get home." Or, in New Mexico: "You can visit an Indian reservation in New York. Let's find out something about the crypto-Jews." Invariably, the only trace of Jewish life that awaited us—even on excursions down to the Lower East Side—would be a long-abandoned synagogue or cemetery. As for living Jews, I came to suspect that, outside the Upper West Side, Long Island's North Shore, and Century Village, they simply didn't exist.

TWO DECADES HAVE NOT COMPLETELY erased the suspicion. In fact, the past year, spent writing a book in rural Virginia, only fed it. Here, again, I found myself hunting for Jewish ghosts. And, on more than one occasion, I found them. The unlikeliest place was surely Staunton, Virginia, once the Warsaw of the Shenandoah Valley. The approach to Staunton cuts through a lush green landscape, all hills and cows. Then, quite literally out of nowhere, there appears what looks to be a deserted stretch of upper Broadway—rows of huge prewar buildings, some with the faded names of Jewish stores painted on their facades, brownstones, and, in the middle of it all, a shul founded in 1876 by a former Confederate Army officer. Robert Rosen, author of the fascinating *The Jewish Confederates*, observes that the Jews of the Confederacy were "Israelites with Egyptian principles." That a people who commemorate their escape from bondage in Egypt celebrated Passover in a society premised on bondage is, to say the least, incongruous. But the Confederacy was good to its Jews—better, surely, than Ulysses S. Grant, who infamously banned Jews from his military district. Repaying the favor, Jewish Southerners spilled their blood at Gettysburg, Antietam, Seven Pines, and throughout the South. One of those who fought was FDR adviser Bernard Baruch's father, Simon, who for years after the war could be heard loosing the rebel yell from, among other places, his seat at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

THE JEWISH CONFEDERATES MAY HAVE fought side by side with their fellow Southerners, but they *were* different. To begin with, few if any were farmers. They toiled instead as traders, shop owners, and, in the case of Moses Ezekiel—a hero of the Battle of New Market, located ten minutes from my house—a future sculptor. Why, their critics and persecutors have been asking since roughly 200 A.D., will the Jews not work the land? Restrictions on land ownership, urbanization, economic factors—all have been offered by way of explanation. Economic historians Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, whose conclusions Steven Landsburg summarizes in a very funny article on Slate.com, have come up with the most persuasive answer I have seen: Judaism. Before you can read the Torah, which an observant Jew must do regularly, you first must know how to read. Literacy, in turn, opens the door to higher-paying occupations. The catalogue of attempts to reverse this history, to go back to the soil, has produced its share of lemons—the short-lived Jewish colonies in Kansas, for example. It has also produced a Jewish state.

VIRGINIA IS NOT IT. AFTER A WHILE, I lost track of the cultural miscues. On one occasion, a trip to the county fair turned sour when, thinking that a procession of pickup trucks was the line for the parking lot, I nearly drove our Hyundai into a monster-truck derby. On another, the idea of a dog being on psychiatric medication—my Shiba Inu was systematically dismantling the quaintly decorated farmhouse we had rented—proved too much for the local pharmacist, who called our big-city veterinarian to complain. Then, of course, there was our hen. She tiptoed up the driveway one day, having fallen off of one of the trucks that carry chickens to their slaughter from a nearby farm. We fed and sheltered her, and, before long, she was following us around the yard and taunting the cows across the fence. Cautioning me not to take this the wrong way, our neighbor remarked that her situation was not unlike, well, that of a Jew escaped from a train. I blanched, visibly.

HERE I WAS, AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL curiosity in a land of anthropological curiosities. That this is how many cosmopolitan thinkers view rural life even today became apparent to me whenever I returned to New York or Washington. *The New York Review of Books*' inveighing against the "false nostalgia for an idyllic life never experienced," Howard Dean's patronizing comments about guns and pickup trucks—in certain quarters, Marx's indictment of the "idiocy of rural life" still seems to pass for wisdom. So, too, does the opposite fallacy, the celebration of rural life as the custodian of values America must recover. Even in the hands of the Romantics, the idealization of country life was always something of a lie, and, in the much less capable hands of American politicians, the lie has only become more obvious. In the town where I lived, drug busts were routine. Several local plants recently closed their doors, and, as a result, vans clogged the road at 4 a.m., carrying workers to jobs 100 miles away. The county newspaper doesn't run ads for Shiba Inus. It runs ads for foreclosure auctions.

MY EXCURSION ENDED LAST WEEK. I write this from a cramped apartment in a dilapidated building in Washington, directly across from the Jewish Community Center, where, I am told, young Jewish professionals go to sweat. The closest thing I have to a rabbi, Lou Reed, warbles a Velvet Underground song about the joy of a city kid boarding a train home after a brief stint on a farm:

Taking me away from my country
I'm sick of the trees
Take me to the city

Even though he imagined living as an alien in the country, Reed sings about leaving "my country." Which, I suppose, is the lesson I learned this year. It's all my country. Our country.

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

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Smaller Target, Better Job

Paul T. Hill is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution; a member of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education; and a research professor and acting dean at the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs.

In many cities the job of school superintendent offers all the satisfactions of the town spear catcher. Able people often leave the job pierced in soul if not in body. Cities such as Seattle and Portland can get qualified men and women to apply for the job but can't keep applicants interested long enough to hire anyone.

A few hardy souls, such as Boston's Tom Payzant and San Diego's Alan Bersin, hang in there. But most superintendents either quit in frustration or are fired when school boards that can't settle on anything else agree that the superintendent is no good.

Superintendents are not all equally well prepared or skillful, but the problem is more with the job than with the people. School superintendents are expected to keep everyone happy, even such groups as parents of gifted and disadvantaged children who are in a zero-sum competition for money. They are supposed to maintain a warm, fuzzy relationship with teachers whose unions are constantly undercutting reform efforts and grabbing any new money that becomes available for salaries and smaller class sizes. They are supposed to get results out of a district central office, many of whose staff members are tenured lifers or have their own power bases in local churches, neighborhoods, and political clubs.

Superintendents are ultimately fired or driven to distraction by school boards, which do a wonderful job of representing all the conflicts and confusions that exist in their communities. It's hard to see how school boards as constituted can do anything else: they too face fractured communities and incompatible demands. But unlike the superintendent they have somebody on whom they can take out their frustrations

Education insiders keep searching for a mutant strain of individuals who can succeed under these circumstances. But the real problem is with the jobs themselves, both of superintendent and of school board member.

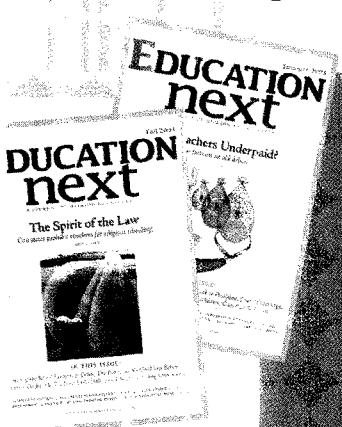
These jobs are setups. Superintendents and school board members are expected to take responsibility for things that they can't influence because state and federal regulations and collective bargaining agreements stand in the way. The scope of the superintendents' nominal powers—hiring all the teachers, spending all the money, choosing all the books, managing all the buses—is so great that every kind of conflict or grievance comes straight to them.

The key to making superintendent and school board jobs doable is to refine the excessive powers and duties to the few that matter, such as focusing on charter schools rather than hiring teachers, holding schools accountable for children's learning instead of dealing with grievances, sending dollars to the schools that parents choose in place of fiddling with centrally administered budgets, withdrawing support from schools that do not teach effectively, developing new schools to replace failed ones, and letting parents choose among schools rather than trying to make the best of a bad family-school match.

Superintendents and school boards can trade in grandiose roles for simpler but more consequential ones and catch a lot fewer spears in the bargain.

— Paul T. Hill

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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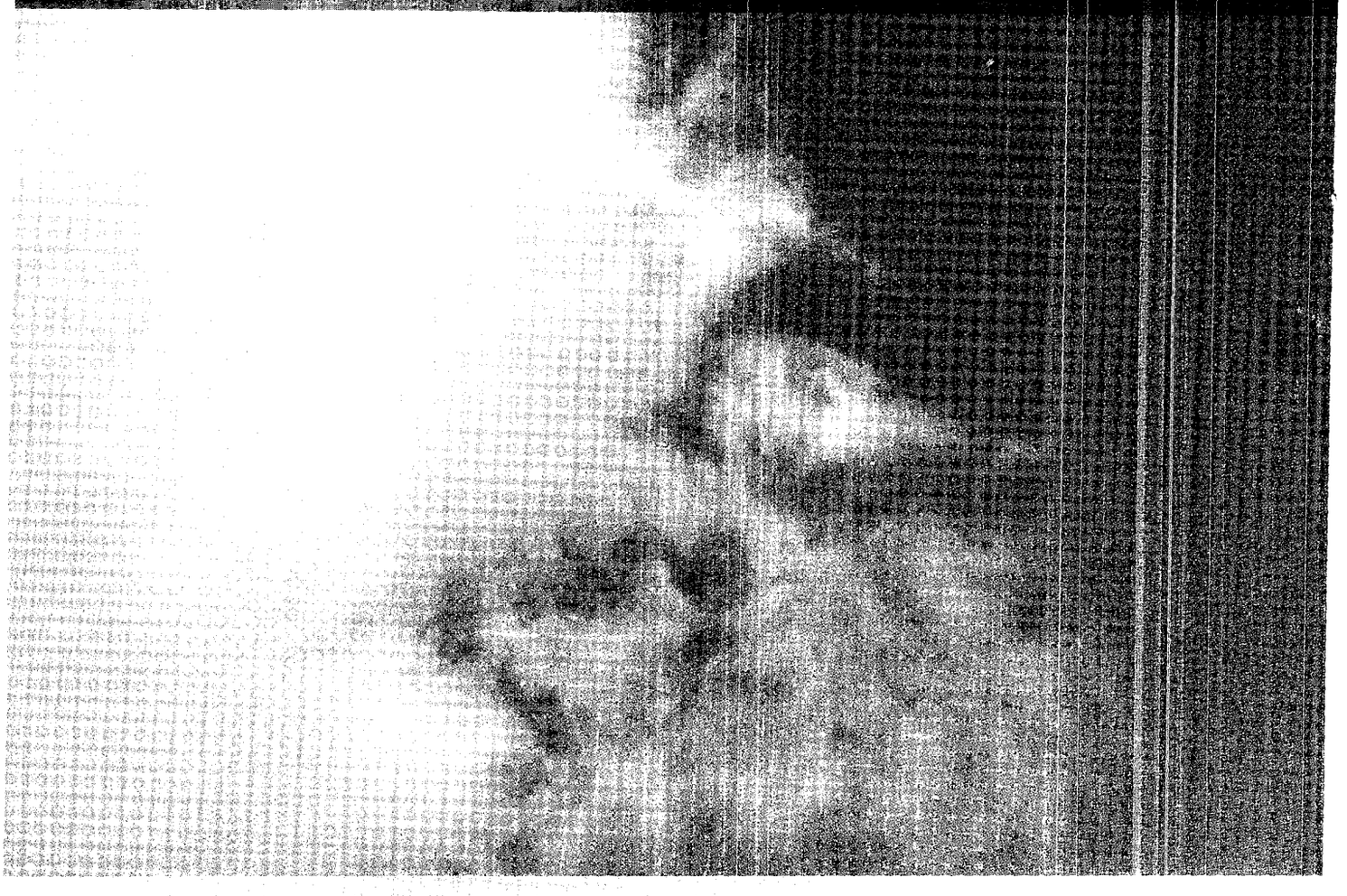
CLOUD THE ISSUE



OR CLEAR THE AIR?

The issue of global warming has given rise to heated debate. Is the burning of fossil fuels and increased concentration of carbon dioxide in the air a serious threat or just a lot of hot air? Shell believes that action needs to be taken now, both

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IS THERE A CHOICE?

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